

Library History Today Blog 3

Library History Today is a convenient way to post information, book reviews, and comments about Canadian library history. Why have a blog on Canadian History? There is a concern with contemporary library political, administrative, economic, and social issues that are relevant to library history. What influence does the study of the "past" have on the "present?" I try to show that there is a dual function that critical history performs: it helps us understand how past thoughts and actions were shaped and that it provides us with a deeper awareness of present changes. In this context, past events, facts, trends, and people can be examined using historical methods and critical theories. As well, we can gain an understanding of explanations for causes and consequences, the use of narratives and evidence, and different versions of the past.

We are constantly reinterpreting history (as events and as historical accounts) using new concepts which emerge from uncovering more evidence and rethinking accepted facts in the light of new ideas and research methodology. "History" can be taken to mean what we accept happened in the past (or, conversely, what did not take place); it can also mean what is written as a result of continuous dialogue: what took place (events); why or how things happened (explanations); who was involved (personages); when did events occur (chronological dimension); and how ideas were formed and the influence they had on contemporaries.

Historical understanding helps us to comprehend cause-and-effect relationships and to avoid judging the past (and by extension "today") in terms of current norms and values. By looking at past library events and decisions in Ontario and across Canada we can develop alternative approaches to contemporary conditions based on a better awareness of the likely consequences. Historical memory is one of the keys to self-identity.

All posts published in **LHTB 3** were authored

and published by

Lorne D. Bruce in

[Library History Today Blog](#)

under a

Creative Commons License:

[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-](#)

[NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#)

Reprinted by *Libraries Today*

2025

BLOG POSTS

2022–25

Click on heading to follow the link

[Education for School Librarianship Workshop, Jasper Park, Alberta, 1968](#)

[From Sigmund Samuel to the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto, 1954–1973](#)

[An Ontario Bookmobile Film *The Books Drive On*, 1948](#)

[Canadian School Libraries and Books for Youth Forum at Winnipeg, 1949](#)

[From Library Work to Library Science: Canadian Librarianship, 1920–1960](#)

[Professionalization and Librarianship in Ontario, 1920–1975](#)

[Special Libraries Organize in Montreal and Toronto, 1930–1945](#)

[Canadian Mid-century School Libraries and Modern Education, 1945—1950](#)

[Canadian School Libraries and Librarianship National Meeting in Edmonton, 1959](#)

[Edwin Williams and Robert Downs Report on Canadian Academic Libraries, 1962—1967](#)

[A New History of the English Public Library: Intellectual and Social Contexts, 1850–1914 by Alistair Black \(1996\)](#)

[The Canadian Library Association is Formed, June 1946](#)

[Anne Isabel Hume \(1892–1966\)](#)

[The Canadian Book Centre at Halifax, 1948–1950](#)

[Controlling Undesirable Magazines in Canada, 1946](#)

[Lapsed Canadian Carnegie Library Grants, 1901–1922](#)

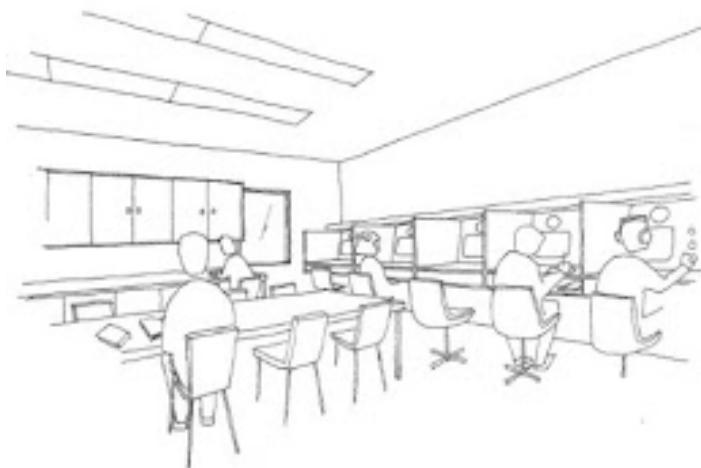
- Pre-Confederation Public Libraries in Canada
West/Ontario, 1841–1867**
- Egerton Ryerson’s Public School Libraries, 1850–1875**
- Citizen Participation in Library Decision-Making: The Toronto Experience* by John Marshall (1984)**
- One Place to Look; The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan* (1990)**
- Raymond Tanghe on Québec libraries and librarianship, 1952–1962**
- Public Libraries and Marxism* by Joe and John Pateman (2021)**
- Four Library Development Reports in British Columbia, 1945 to 1956**
- Library Service in New Brunswick* by Peter Grossman (1953)**
- Ontario Libraries: A Province-Wide Survey and Plan, 1965* by Francis R. St. John Library Consultants**
- Report on Provincial Library Service in Ontario* by W. Stewart Wallace (1957)**
- In Solidarity: Academic Librarian Labour Activism and Union Participation in Canada* (2014)**
- William Austin Mahoney: A Prolific Canadian Carnegie Library Architect**
- Parents of Invention* (2011) by Christopher Brown-Syed**
- Intellectual Freedom Statement: The Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario, April 1972**
- Confronting the Democratic Discourse of Librarianship: A Marxist Approach* (2019) by Sam Popowich**
- The Ontario Public Library: Review and Reorganization* by Albert Bowron (1975)**
- James John Talman (1904–1993)**

- Fred Landon (1880-1969)**
- Gerhard Richard Lomer (1882–1970)**
- Project Progress: A Study of Canadian Public Libraries*, 1981**
- Elizabeth Dafoe (1900–1960)**
- Mary Sollace Saxe (1865–1942)**
- Lillian Helena Smith (1887–1983)**
- Marie-Claire Daveluy (1880–1968)**
- Mary Kinley Ingraham (1874–1949)**
- Helen Gordon Stewart (1879–1971)**
- B. Mabel Dunham (1881–1957)**
- Mary J.L. Black (1879–1939)**
- Ontario Public Libraries: The Provincial Role in a Triad of Responsibilities*, 1982**
- Libraries of Metropolitan Toronto* (1960) by Ralph Shaw**
- Ontario's Centennial Libraries, 1966–1967**
- Libraries: Past, Present, Future.* An address by Marshall McLuhan, 1970**
- Intellectual Freedom Statement Adopted by the Canadian Library Association in June 1966**
- Intellectual Freedom Statement Adopted by Ontario Library Association in 1963**

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Education for School Librarianship Workshop, Jasper Park, Alberta, 1968

Education for School Librarianship in Canada; Proceedings of a Workshop, Jasper Park Lodge, Alberta on Saturday, 8 June 1968. Sponsored by the Canadian School Library Association, Alberta School Library Council, and Saskatchewan Association of School Librarians. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1970. 69 p.



Audio-visual reference room

During the affluent 1960s, most new school buildings included a library resource centre, a term that referred to a service focusing on multimedia resources. Renovations and expansions of existing buildings modernized school libraries with enlarged, better equipped centralized spaces and resources. It was era of progress. Schools were employing multimedia resources at both elementary and secondary levels, increasing budgets for printed resources, and improving training for professional, para-professional and clerical staff to provide services to students and teachers. In 1967, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reported

there were 16.3 million books in 5,188 centralized libraries compared to 4.3 million in 1,613 libraries in 1960. During the same period, the proportion of students with libraries almost doubled from 24.6% to 46.9% but there were still 2,794.9 million students without centralized libraries in 1967. Many students found the use of new audio-visual resources and techniques to be more immediate and more effective than books and periodicals. At the same time, educators began to use the terminology ‘learning resource centre’ in place of the school library.

Although there was progress in forming and staffing school libraries and learning resource centres with teacher-librarians (T-Ls), surveys indicate there were insufficient T-Ls who held a BLS or who had taken courses in school librarianship offered by a library school or by provincial departments of education. In 1960, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reported 155 professional librarians (persons with a library science degree) in schools with 281 trained teachers either with some library qualifications or none. By 1967, the Bureau reported 365 professionals (Ontario did not report) and 1,124 trained teachers. Library educators disagreed on the need for a library degree and provincial departmental courses often were limited to small enrollments and conducted during the summer at irregular intervals. The result was limited library training in schools and a tendency to promote the teaching of library-related content by classroom visits or individual sessions with students.

At the outset of the 1960s, printed materials in school libraries were often regarded as an auxiliary to independent learning rather than a valued asset that directly supported the school curriculum. Classroom visits by high school students to the library were often under the direction of an English teacher and instruction in library skills was limited due to lack of dedicated staffing. Although student instruction in library methods and the promotion of good reading continued to be staples in the broader philosophy of school librarianship, the decade also was a time of innovation. Leonard Freiser, the Chief Librarian for the Toronto Board of Education, established an Education Centre Library to

order, catalogue and process resources as well as provide information searches and document delivery for teachers and librarians. He reported more than 25,000 requests were received during one year, 1967. His critics countered that the school library ought to teach students to think critically and provide them with the skills to achieve their own self-directed learning. Beyond the school library, many new ideas infused Canadian education: collaborative student work in activity-based group work, greater attention to mathematics and science, encouragement of new technologies and resources in classrooms, more advanced qualifications for entry into teachers' colleges or university faculties of education, open space designs for classrooms, and student demands for more practical knowledge reflecting a multicultural society.

In recognition of the need for guidance, the Canadian School Library Association (CSLA) formulated its *Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools* in 1967. The standards stressed the need for an effective school library program developed collaboratively, citing three principles: (1) the provision of in-depth materials for learning following curriculum outlines, (2) each pupil should have access to a variety of materials regardless of school enrollment, and (3) each school must provide required learning materials regardless of its size. The librarian's functions were outlined as building and organizing collections of instructional materials, assisting teachers and pupils to maximize their use of resources, training and directing clerical and student assistants, and using public relations to maintain a vital library program. The CSLA standards applied to schools of varying sizes but were not mandatory. One forceful criticism was the lack of attention to the acquisition, organization, and distribution of media resources because printed holdings were a primary concern. The standards seemed to be a retrospective vision to some professionals. Although the standards encouraged the integration of print and non-print resources, some educators believed specialist training for non-book materials was a reason for separating the school library from the media centre. When the standards were issued, many educationists hoped that every school would have a library and a trained librarian to operate it.

The Jasper Park Workshop on Education for School Librarianship, June 8, 1968

It was in this context that the CSLA examined the state of school library education in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Association of School Librarians and the Alberta School Library Council. This meeting attracted 300 educators and librarians from across Canada. The one-day session aimed to air differing viewpoints on three major issues central to school librarianship and provide attendees with future directions. Given the circumstances of changing school priorities in forming and using libraries, the discussions focused on three topics: (1) the role of the library technician in the school library, (2) the integration of new media in the school library, and (3) the status of the school librarian as a teacher. Several informative background papers describing Canadian programs for educating school librarians (printed with the workshop proceedings) appeared in *Moccasin Telegraph*, the newsletter of the CSLA, prior to the workshop.

The keynote speaker was Frances Henne, School of Library Service at Columbia University. She was well qualified to speak to the theme issues. As far back as 1945 she had helped formulate standards for the American Library Association (ALA) publication *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*. She was particularly interested in researching and teaching programs for children and young adults in public libraries and schools. Now, in the late 1960s, as she approached retirement, she was closely involved in the development of revised American guidelines, *Standards for School Media Programs*, to be published later in 1969. In her opening address, Dr. Henne expanded on the new directions that standards were slated to introduce. New ALA terminology, such as media center, media specialist, or instructional materials center, signalled the importance of non-book formats in school programs. The new standards stressed the role of the media specialist in helping students develop competence in listening, viewing, and reading skills. Media specialists should work cooperatively with teachers in designing learning activities that use a variety of formats in classrooms. Nevertheless, she concluded with a spirited message

by returning to the library's time-honoured potential: "That seemingly static space in the architect's blueprint is alive with its tremendous actuality and potentiality ... To each young person, the responses are manifold, not only in shared, already experienced beliefs, but also in the opening, exciting vistas of the unknown." (p. 6)

The first panel discussed the role library technicians and support staff might undertake in schools. The emerging classes of library technicians from recently formed community colleges—about 400 graduates—drew the attention of three panelists. There were concerns about their role in media instruction and the possibility that they might displace librarians. June Munro, the Supervisor of Extension Services in the Ontario Provincial Library Service, believed there was no doubt about the value of technicians in school libraries, especially in district or regional centres where they could be integrated with other library personnel. Two other panelists noted that school boards were already employing teacher aides in classrooms, and it seemed technicians would fall into a similar category in provincial educational hierarchies. They agreed that school library supervisors should clarify the difference between technical and professional services and notify administrators in their districts.

A variety of instructional media, such as films, videos, audio recordings, slides, and filmstrips, presented opportunities to support educational programs. The second panel addressed problems associated with the purchase, organization, storage, and distribution of these formats. Helen Donaldson, a long-time school librarian and a supervisor for school libraries in East York (Toronto), emphasized the need to have "integration of management and also materials [so] that we can improve the library resource centre service to both pupils and teachers and in this way become a strong educational force in up-grading the quality of the educational program." (p. 21) Media required a variety of specially trained staff, of which the librarian was only one. Clearly, it seemed media specialists should be working as part of a teaching team in schools. It was felt that media resources should be as accessible as possible and placed in

classrooms, laboratories, or special learning centres where they would receive maximum use. A central school library was just one possibility.

The third panel discussed “Teacher and Library Education in School Librarianship: Professional Dualism or Schizophrenia.” Panelists felt the fundamental role of the school librarian should be to work with teachers as team members directly involved in the education of students. But, was teacher training and certification necessary for the school librarian with library school standing? Lawrence Wiedrick, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta, who had extensive prior experience as a T-L, held that preparation in both education and librarianship was essential but that the emphasis in the workplace depended on local circumstances. He believed “more graduate programs in school libraries are required because extensive specialization at the undergraduate level is not desirable or usually possible ... programs should be offered by both colleges of education and library schools in order that candidates can choose a specialty within either field.” (p. 31) Another panelist pointed to a more proactive role: “School librarians are part of the educational team. They don’t serve teachers—they work with them as colleagues.” (p. 37) Generally, panelists agreed that the school librarian should be prepared first for professional teaching, which involved certification, and only secondly as a specialist.

The one-day workshop finished late in the afternoon with a summary by Frances Henne. Her thoughts, as before, emphasized that the functions of technicians should be clearly defined, that schools required staff with varying specialties, and that the school librarian could be a teacher closely involved in curriculum planning and the learning process. A systems approach, rather than independent schools, was needed to maximize the use of resources. The school library had a function of its own and therefore should play an essential part in making its voice heard in decisions about library/media administration.

Afterwards: School Librarians and a New Professional Model

The 1968 Jasper workshop was designed to allow educators to hear various opinions about the changing priorities in traditional school library service and the newer instructional media centres that were progressing. No recommendations were brought forward but the general discussions and background papers sharpened participants' views and suggested options that might be useful. In the following year, June 1969, at the Canadian Library Association (CLA) national meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, CSLA arranged to have Jean E. Lowrie, the former President of the American Association of School Libraries (1963–64) and future President of the ALA in 1973–74 speak to school librarians about the role of the administrator in media centres. She was an advocate for school libraries fulfilling an instructional role with all types of media that was responsive and creative to the needs of teachers and students. Yet there was a growing realization that a significant number of Canadian schools were unable to meet the CSLA 1967 standards for personnel or facilities, although many came closer to meeting the collection guidelines.

In terms of clarifying roles, the CLA approved a statement, "Guidelines for the Training of Library Technicians," in 1973. In the mid-1970s, the CSLA and the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada collaborated on an integrated definition of the role of the school library in providing all types of learning materials. The resulting publication, *Resource Services for Canadian Schools* (1977), presented national guidelines for resource centre services for the learning resource teacher and T-Ls. This publication superseded the 1967 CSLA standards and provided more guidance on media integration, district services, information access, programming and personnel rather than focusing on measures of materials and their arrangement.

Library education, too, continued to evolve. By the late 1970s, the worthy philosophy that the T-L was a cooperative planner

and joint implementer of curriculum was at a youthful stage. As a model, the enhanced role proposed that T-Ls should actively participate with teachers in the planning and implementing of classroom units of study utilizing their knowledge of resources. This fundamental shift meant that library skills could be developed in jointly planned and implemented classroom learning exercises rather than scheduled class visits to the library.



Elizabeth Gardens Public School library, Burlington, Ontario, c. 1970

In 1979, the CSLA issued “The Qualifications of School Librarians;” it reflected philosophic educational changes. This statement recommended that a teaching certificate and successful classroom teaching experience were prerequisites for entry into a school library program and that programs should only be offered at the graduate or post-baccalaureate level. Qualified school librarians were tasked with competencies in areas such as professional leadership, acquisition, organization and use of learning resources, instructional design, and production of learning resources. It was an ambitious change for school librarianship.

Although there were pressures on funding for school libraries during a period of decreasing enrollment, economic recession, and rapid inflation in the 1970s, expenditures on books and

media remained an integral component of school budgeting. A decade later, in 1979, Statistics Canada reported that school libraries held 49,547,798 books and 5,824,726 non-print audio-visual formats. Growth was slower but continued—in 1967/68 schools had reported holdings of 16 million books (there were no comparable data for non-print materials). Personnel increases were less impressive: in 1967/68 there were 2,975 full-time staff (566 with a library degree); in 1979 there were 5,171 personnel (451 with a library degree). Educational opportunities for T-Ls had led to 3,390 professional positions, i.e., teachers with certificates in school librarianship/media services but no library degree, teachers with courses in school librarianship/media services but without a certificate, teachers without courses in school librarianship/media services, and audiovisual specialists with university degree but no teaching degree or certificate.

But a number of factors would eventually contribute to a slower growth of a larger national cohort of better trained T-Ls: (1) provincial education regulations did not insist that qualified T-Ls staff school libraries; (2) teachers found it more challenging to enroll in the revised three or four semester MLS programs after library schools eliminated the older two semester BLS program; (3) many T-Ls felt the usual three session program of university faculties of education leading to specialist qualifications in school librarianship should be bolstered with additional courses. Furthermore, individual library school course options tended to emphasize literature and reading for children or young adults as well as general school library administration. The faculties of education provided more specific courses that emphasized the role of T-Ls in media and curriculum development but did not develop comprehensive programs of study about school libraries.

The Jasper workshop occurred just before the significant shift in thinking about the role of the T-L and the school library. The 1980s would prove to be even more challenging than the clarification of roles in the 1970s, which remained to be universally recognized in educational hierarchies. Educational programs were usually planned and approved at various levels by administrators and elected officials who were often unaware

of the school library's potential or what was happening in them, thus perpetuating the subordinate profile of school librarianship in the development of school curricula in many school jurisdictions across the country.

Further Reading

A biography of Frances Henne is at [Wikipedia](#) and one of Jean E. Lowrie is also at [Wikipedia](#).

A [national meeting on school librarianship at Edmonton in 1959](#) is the subject of my earlier blog.

Thursday, May 22, 2025

From Sigmund Samuel to the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto, 1954–1973

Over the course of twenty years, in the 1950s and 1960s, libraries at the University of Toronto continued to expand and improve as they became collectively the most extensive university holdings in Canada. The library system, under the leadership of Robert Blackburn, also refined its philosophy concerning the necessity for a centralized research collection that could serve the needs of graduate studies. During this period, the architectural styles of the Modern Movement and new technologies of construction utilizing steel, glass, and concrete also broke with past practices. In 1954, the Sigmund Samuel Library (SSL) was constructed using Queenston limestone adjacent to the original library building with the Samuel family crest above the entrance. The coat of arms in stained glass above the entrance had been granted to the Samuel family by Oliver Cromwell in 1670. When the John P. Robarts Research Library was completed in 1973, the humanities and social science collection was transferred to the new building. The original building became the Science and Medicine Library and host of Canada's largest academic science and medicine library.

If the sleek rectilinear lines, large airy windows, open main floor plan, and simple functionality of the International Style in architecture exhibited by the SSL comforted people along with Samuel family coat of arms over the doorway, the opposite was true when the massive 14-storey John P. Robarts Research Library with two basement levels opened at 130 St. George Street. At the time, it was about one million sq. ft. in size and the largest academic library building in the world. It could accommodate four thousand users and held just under three million volumes. While its scale was breathtaking, its poured concrete Brutalist style, provincial funding, and original plans

for restricted stack access provoked controversy before and after the opening of ‘Fort Book.’

The Sigmund Samuel Library, 1953–54



Sigmund Samuel wing, c.1955

When Toronto’s first standalone Romanesque style University Library opened in 1892, it was designed to seat 200 readers and accommodate 120,000 books. It offered reference for students and lending privileges for faculty. Over decades, it became crowded, and by the late 1920s, the chief librarian, W. Stewart Wallace, planned for an extension; however, depression era financial difficulties and the Second World War halted progress. As collections grew, the smaller college libraries slowly expanded due to limited space in the central library. Finally, in 1951, Sigmund Samuel, a prominent Toronto business leader and philanthropist, promised a donation of \$500,000 towards construction of a \$3,000,000 extension. Sigmund was the son of Lewis Samuel, a very early Jewish immigrant to Canada from England. Sigmund was born in Toronto in 1867 and the family

was quite prominent both in the Jewish community and the city of Toronto. His father, Lewis, was President of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute in 1879.



University of Toronto Archives, ZK8-01-061

Sigmund Samuel and Alan Mathers

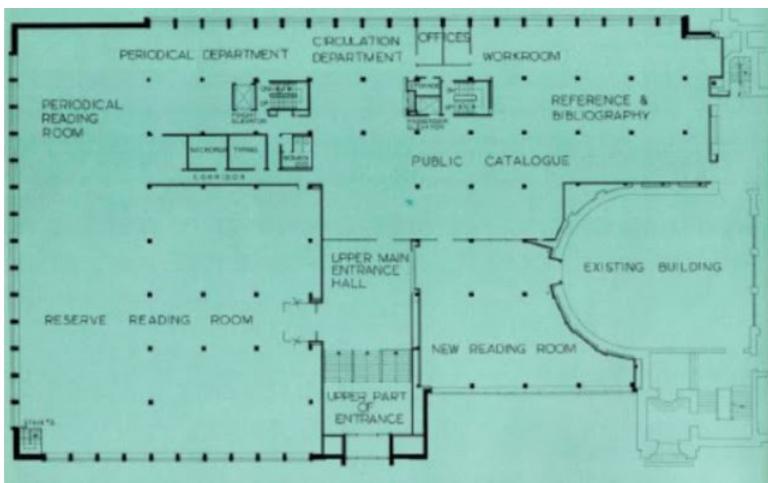
Construction on the new wing began in late 1953. This addition became an attractive five-storey 'wing' extension, a popular concept in academic library buildings after WWII. The circulation, reference, and periodicals departments were on the main floor with the humanities and social sciences book stacks in the three basement levels. The acquisitions and cataloguing departments were located on the second above ground

floor. When W.S. Wallace decided to retire in spring 1954, the reserve book room inside the SSL was renamed in his honour and Alice Moulton, an experienced circulation librarian, placed in charge. A formal opening took place on November 26, 1954, with Sigmund Samuel and the architect Alvan Mathers of Mathers & Haldenby on hand in recognition of their contributions to the much needed project.

The next day, a colloquium on the future prospects of research libraries was held featuring W.S. Wallace, William Kaye Lamb, and notable librarians from the United States. A pamphlet, *The Research Library*, reporting the proceedings was published by the Canadian Library Association in 1955. The colloquium stressed the need to organize specialized collections and develop effective systems of nationwide cooperation, especially by the nascent National Library. Generally, students welcomed the new

facility. *The Varsity* (March 9, 1955) reported, “The new library has many popular features: the open-shelf system, the attractive appearance, the good lighting (which incidentally promotes social life, as you can now see the student across the table from you). There is still some dissatisfaction, however — students have been petitioning to have closing time extended from 10.00 to 11.00.” The large windows that allowed ample lighting were particularly popular. The SSL was designed to make about one million volumes available for users. It also became a vital social centre for seminars, talks, receptions, student sales, elections, a faculty reading area, a staff room, and even a small smoking room. The Stewart Wallace Room was organized to hold 20,000 volumes and accommodated 380 users. It was often filled to capacity at critical times for student paper deadlines or examinations. When its open shelves were closed due to \$8,000 book theft reported by the *Globe and Mail* on December 9, 1959 (“Students Petition for Return of Open-Shelf Library”), leaving students to fill in request slips to obtain books, they unsuccessfully petitioned the library to rescind its policy. However, unrest continued until 1961, when they were permitted access if they attended an instructional session.

Robert Blackburn’s history, *Evolution of the Heart* (1989), provides a chapter on the genesis, design phase, and construction of the SSL. Although the extension provided necessary relief for collections and reader space, in fact, after a few years, the new wing itself became crowded. Administrators realized larger quarters would be necessary. The only major campus library built after the SSL was the E.J. Pratt Library at Victoria College, which opened in 1961. It was a plain, two-storey, granite-clad edifice with open stacks and extensive windows allowing students to view attractive landscaping. Consequently, planning for this necessity began in the late 1950s, especially when Claude T. Bissell, a promoter of libraries, became President of the University in 1958. He quickly formed an advisory committee for future library services and buildings chaired by Roland McLaughlin to recommend new directions for the entire university library system.



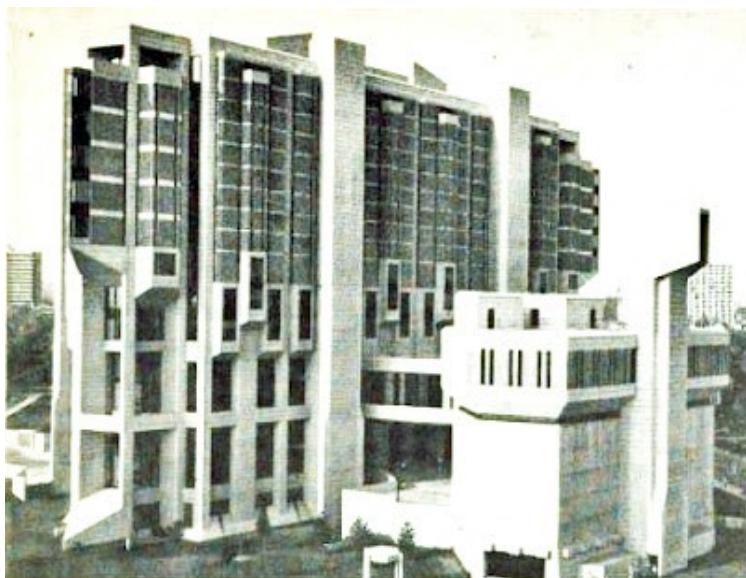
Sigmund Samuel Library first floor plan

The McLaughlin Committee report issued in January 1959. It recommended that a policy of centralization of departmental libraries be pursued to coordinate services, that the Library of Congress classification be adopted, that a union catalogue of holdings be established, and that 75,000 sq. ft. be added to the present SSL and another 82,700 square feet erected on the site of the Engineering Building on King's College Circle. For future expansion, an additional 60,000 sq. ft. would be necessary. With the study completed, another committee was established to report on a new central facility, but not until 1965, with the full support of Claude Bissell, were plans recommended by the committee approved. There was an air of optimism about the project. When Claude Bissell spoke at the annual meeting of the Canadian Library Association held in Toronto in June 1965, he articulated the role of the projected research library: "The profile of the new research library in the university is that of an active scholarly headquarters with a close working relationship between professional supervisors and users. It will be a much more lively, much more heavily populated building than the old library." His focus was upon the humanities and social sciences and a new library of about 500,000 sq. ft. that the second committee had settled on. In the intervening five years, it was assumed that resources would be moved from the crowded SSL

to the new central library. The SSL would continue with a duplicate collection for undergraduates and they would not have direct access to the collections of the new building. During the time the second committee did its work, important issues were raised in a national study by Edwin Williams, *Resources of Canadian University Libraries*. It reported the need for increased financial support for research collections, especially at the graduate level. Also, the block of land at the corner of St. George and Harbord Streets was chosen as a new site for a grand central library. In 1966, after publication of the Spinks Report on the development of graduate education in Ontario, the Provincial government indicated that it could help finance the research library project. This report recommended that Toronto be designated as the major provincial resource centre and its holdings be available to all faculty and qualified graduate students. As such, the Province should support Toronto's expansion to assume these new responsibilities.

The John P. Robarts Research Library, 1968–73

With the University's acceptance of the 1965 report, serious design planning and preliminary engineering reports began and were finished in early 1967. A triangular building with fourteen levels above ground and two below was proposed. The main service floor was situated on the fourth level with circulation to closed stacks, reference, a public catalogue, and periodicals reading area. Access to two smaller wings, one for rare books and one for the library school, allowed access to these satellite areas. The budget had ballooned to just under \$42 million, a phenomenal amount for a Canadian university library devoted to the humanities and social sciences, but the Ontario government authorized \$40 million in support, which cleared the way for construction to begin at the end of 1968. In July 1971, the University Board of Governors named the main library in honour of John Parmenter Robarts, the seventeenth Premier of Ontario, 1961–71.



Robarts Library with the Rare Book wing, 1974

The eight-storey 100,000 sq. ft. wing for the School of Library Science was the first completed section of the library complex and was occupied in June 1971. It was renamed the Claude T. Bissell building in 1984, which became the home to the Faculty of Information. The rare book wing, which featured a warm, inviting interior, opened in December 1972 and was named the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library in honour of Thomas Fisher, whose grandsons donated valuable collections of Shakespeare and other authors to the university library. Selected campus collections, staff, and services moved into the Robarts Library during the first part of 1973. The library quietly opened in July. Alice Moulton, who had become head of circulation of library systems in the 1960s, supervised the move of books from the SSL to the new building.

The monumental scale of the concrete complex dwarfed previous library quarters and offered the prospect of vastly better quality and quantity of services. But it did not come without controversy. The initial decision to limit access to collections for undergraduates, except for fourth-year students, provoked

widespread student protests at a time when the concepts of ‘student power’ and ‘stakeholders’ were prompting student activism. In early March 1972, the University Senate rejected student appeals to allow all students and the public complete access to the building, its services and collections. Shortly afterwards, police removed and arrested 18 people, mainly students, at a sit-in in Simcoe Hall on King’s College Circle, a short distance from the SSL. A lengthy *Globe and Mail* article on March 13 called attention to the issues: “Brutal tactics claimed: 18 charged as police end sit-in over U of T library.” By the end of March, limited access was struck down: the Senate proposed that all University members would be eligible to use the Robarts Library and apply for entry to the book stacks. In 1972, there were more than 55,000 thousand potential users. Later, when a newly structured Governing Council officially came into being in July 1972 to replace the previous Board of Governors and University Senate, it adopted this principle.

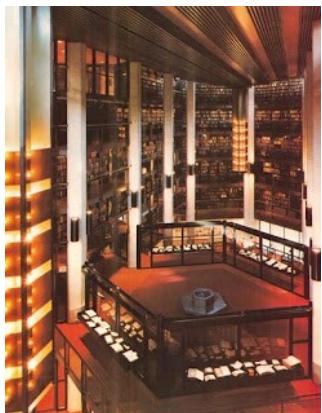
Harsh commentary turned to the monumental design of Robarts, a feature many early century Carnegie libraries had suffered with for decades. Although the use of unpainted concrete in large buildings was not unusual in Canada in this period, the magnitude of Robarts startled many observers. In “Fort Book: It’s 14 storeys of literary intimidation,” an article in the *Toronto Star* on Sept 28, 1974, the journalist Robert Fulford declared, “the John P. Robarts Research Library is just about the most intimidating building ever devised by the mind of man.” Many people—architects, passersby, and students—hated the library. Nonetheless, Fulford had to admit it worked with the proviso,

*But the fact is that since the Robarts opened, library use on campus—borrowing, reading in the library, etc.—has increased almost 100 per cent. This means that the old facilities of the Sigmund Samuel Library were overcrowded, that new facilities were needed, and that to some extent Robarts has filled the need. Students may write nasty articles about it in *The Varsity*, the student daily, but they use it.*

One of the more loquacious student critics of *The Varsity* was

Linda McQuiag, who opined in its pages from time to time. On November 26, 1972 (“Take a Good Look before Books Go”), she reported that the book move from the SSL to Robarts would likely disenfranchise undergrads who would be denied access to resources they previously had. She also raised the issue of the enormous percentage of tax funding by Ontario taxpayers and the use of it by researchers from other universities. Later, she revisited funding issues when she reported in the *Globe and Mail* on July 10, 1973 (“Robarts Library: lavish but Book-poor”) about library budget woes, inflation, and expenditures reductions that might have been trimmed costs during the construction stage, such as posh lounges in the library science wing or the front tower that made the entire structure look like a turkey (or peacock) from the Harbord Street side. Perhaps there was no formal opening of Robarts with ribbon cutting, etc., because of the controversies surrounding the library structure, its use, and its purpose.

From Sigmund Samuel to Robarts



Thomas Fisher Rare Book
Room, c. 1975

In retrospect, the two libraries reflected the changing fortunes of 20th century Canadian post-secondary education and the growth of Toronto. The SSL was built when universities developed with modest financial revenues and smaller enrollments that denied the bold planning strokes that Robarts ostentatiously displayed. The dramatic expansion of universities and new colleges in the 1960s was due to a vast infusion of federal and provincial funding necessary to meet rapidly increasing student numbers and to develop

comprehensive research resources. The Sigmund Samuel and Robarts libraries celebrated the humanities and social sciences, but gradually, the SSL and its aged partner, the University

Library of 1892, transitioned to a science and health complex sketchily outlined in the McLaughlin report. Eventually, in 1997, these two libraries were renamed the Gerstein Science Information Centre to denote a large donation from the Frank Gerstein Charitable Foundation. The SSL undergraduate humanities and social sciences materials were integrated into other campus library collections, and the reading areas expanded to accommodate science students and faculty. The Wallace Room continued with study carrels, tables for reading, and computer work stations. The Robarts Library grew in stature and became a world-class research institution.

As the city of Toronto grew from a regional hub to Canada's metropolitan centre, the Brutalist Style was often evident in public buildings. The striking impression of this style symbolized a utilitarian approach to building, permanence, and a new expressive form for public gatherings. Concrete was a reliable, economical material used in other ambitious contemporary buildings which featured Brutalist elements, such as the York University central Scott Library (opened in 1971), Four Seasons Sheraton Hotel (opened 1972), and the CN Tower (opened 1976). Today, many people still consider the Robarts complex ugly, except for a short time in spring when the blossoms of its cherry trees planted in 2005 are in season.

A University of Toronto celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Robarts is [at this link](#).

My blog on the reports by Edwin Williams and Robert B. Downs is [at this link](#).

A short biography of Alice Moulton is at the Ex Libris Association [at this link](#).

A biography of Robert H. Blackburn is at the Ex Libris Association [at this link](#).

Friday, May 09, 2025

An Ontario Bookmobile Film *The Books Drive On, 1948*

The Books Drive On. 16 mm film, colour and sound, 1948.
Produced by Jean and Glen Eckmier, photography by Bob Henry
and script by Tom Rafferty from CKNX radio.

Ontario libraries were late adopters of motorized bookmobile service. In the 19th century travelling library service by agencies in the UK and USA were innovative extension ideas to reach readers in unserved areas. In Canada, travelling libraries, boxes of books usually shipped to local communities or schools, were introduced first in British Columbia in 1898 by E.O.S, Scholefield, the Provincial Librarian and Archivist. In 1899, McGill University began serving areas in rural Quebec thanks to the sponsorship of Hugh McLennan. The Ontario Department of Education began its service to northern lumber camps in 1901. These systems proved to be so popular that they were expanded and continued for more than half a century before they were discontinued.

Canadian Bookmobiles Begin Operating from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coasts

The first Canadian motorized bookmobiles, which contemporaries often called book vans, book trucks, or libraries-on-wheels, appeared in the Maritimes and British Columbia as early as 1930. In two summers, 1930 and 1931, Acadia University operated two bookmobiles, one in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia and the other in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Each modified book truck carried 1,500 books and visited station stops eight times during the summer. Unfortunately, worsening economic conditions at the outset of the Great Depression forced the termination of this service. In the Fraser Valley, B.C., the Carnegie Corporation sponsored a regional library demonstration commencing in late summer 1930

that included a bookmobile service. It proved to be highly successful under the direction of notable librarians, Helen Gordon Stewart, the director and the assistant, Nora Bateson, who later championed regional services in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island before 1939.



In Ontario, regional library systems developed slowly on a county basis. The improvement of transportation routes in the 1920s and 1930s provided the opportunity to deliver book

collections more easily and rapidly via motorized vehicles. The Ontario Department of Highways financed the growth of a provincial highway network assisted by the Good Roads Association based in municipalities and counties. Major highway construction and secondary roads facilitated commercial truck traffic, inter-city bus lines, and private automobile travel. The formation of county library associations in the 1930s and then county library co-operatives after the Second World War occurred mostly in southwestern Ontario. By 1935, Lambton County trustees introduced a small two-wheeled trailer (the 'book van' at left) with built-in shelving towed by a vehicle.



Middlesex County began operating a small cabin-style book trailer carrying 1,200 books in 1940. These were not motorized bookmobiles and wartime rationing on gasoline and rubber

halted further progress by county library associations until after 1945.

The Huron County Bookmobile

The Huron County Library Association was formed in 1941. Sixteen participating libraries agreed to pay an annual fee of \$25 to share books transported by car on a rotating basis. In 1945, Mrs. Jean Eckmier became the county librarian and her husband, Glen, was hired as her assistant. For a few years they delivered books using their own car, but in 1947, the Huron County Library Cooperative purchased an imported American van adapted to bookmobile standards and nicknamed "Miss Huron" for just over \$3000. It was the first driven bookmobile in Ontario, an International Harvester one-ton metro van, a type frequently used to deliver milk and bakery items to homes across North America after WW II. The body was built over the engine, thus giving more room for about 1,000 books. This compact model bookmobile was used to supply each participating library with 100 books on a quarterly rotating basis.



Angus Mowat, the Inspector of Public Libraries for the Ontario Department of Education, rode in the vehicle for two days in September 1947 and made a lengthy report with interesting

observations in his notebook (pp. 513–514), which now resides at the D.B. Weldon Library at the Western University. A few of his excerpts follow:

The cab is built over [the] engine, thus allowing extra space in [the] rear. Front doors slide and driver's seat sets forward, giving wide entrance.

Truck is very easily handled and can turn in short space.

Headroom 5' 7." Width of floor between shelving 4' 8." Shelves 8' long, six shelves high, house approximately 1000 [books].

Shelving is of wood made locally, and each edge has a 3/4" lip to keep books on. A hinged lip would be better, making it easier to remove the books when in action. Light by day is from the large windshield and windows in [the] rear doors. At night there is only a single dome lamp. Maybe they'll need more.

The general appearance of the vehicle is good. It is painted in a dark green, picked out by a lighter stripe.

Everything about the vehicle gives an impression of solidity and strength. It sides evenly and even though we went off on one or two quite rough detours the books did not offer to budge. I think, however, that dust may prove to be something of a problem.

There will be heater and de-froster in winter.

Wherever we went on the two days I was out on exchange the van caused considerable interest, at least among the library people and small boys. In fact, on two occasions the small boys promptly invited themselves aboard and selected some of the books they wanted the librarian to take out.

I was surprised to see how quickly the exchanges were made [deposits and returns of 100 books per library]. The shortest one was 35 minutes and the longest about one hour. This is about twice as quickly as exchanges were made when trays were carried in a passenger automobile.

The Inspector also penned a short article about his ride through the farm fields and small county towns in the November 1947 issue of the *Ontario Library Review* with an enthusiastic comment, “The librarian didn’t sing, but I did.”

Late in 1947, the county library trustees and county council authorized the production of a 16 mm film featuring the new bookmobile and the work of Jean and Glen Eckmier with a grant from the county council. The energetic couple took charge of the entire production and enlisted the help of Tom Rafferty of the Wingham radio station, CKNX (known as the Farm Station), to compose the script and to provide its commentary. Bob Henry did the colour photography and Wilford T. Cruickshank, a previous library trustee and owner of CKNX, assisted in production. Shooting began in November 1947 and finished several months later in August 1948. During filming, Stanley Beacock, the chief librarian in Lambton County, drove Miss Huron to the Canadian Library Association gathering in Ottawa in June 1948 for a special session on transportation in regional and county work. The Huron bookmobile was one of three prominent exhibits at the conference.

This ‘amateur’ film was not remarkably different from other bookmobile motion pictures that featured visits to readers at stations and small libraries. Still, it had a quality of highlighting the rural features of Huron County—the dusty streets of small hamlets, busy street front stores, livestock, field crops, farm machinery, children, adults and seniors gathering their books, greenery and trees along county roadways, attractive streets of the county seat, Goderich, the sleekly designed bookmobile with its gold trimmed lettering, and the sunset at the end of the day. Libraries were popular throughout Huron and there were five existing Carnegie buildings: Brussels, Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, and Seaforth. Other libraries were located in smaller communities, such as Auburn, Bayfield, Blyth, Dungannon, Hensall, and Kirkton, as well as township schools. During its initial years, the film grew in popularity. The National Film Board contributed \$2500 to purchase a negative print. Later, *The Books Drive On* was advertised for sale in the *Library Journal* and the *Wilson Library Bulletin*. By 1951, the film had been exhibited across Canada and the United States and had left a lasting impression of county library work in a rural setting.

County library bookmobiles appeared across rural Ontario during the 1950s: in Simcoe, Lambton, Middlesex, Peel, Kent, and other cooperative systems. These mobile units primarily refreshed collections in small local libraries and schools from a central county headquarters. In urban Ontario the bookmobile provided an extension service and they proved to be successful in cities such as Ottawa, Hamilton, and London. Expanding suburban municipal library boards, such as East York and North York, purchased bookmobiles to reach people directly at designated stops. Through the 1960s and 1970s bookmobiles continued to be popular, although improved branch library services across the province in cities and counties lessened their need to reach people. After 2000, bookmobile service again picked up and today (2025) there are about fifteen bookmobiles in operation across Ontario because it is reasonably economical and reaches many people who find it more convenient to use.

Jean Eckmier and her husband, Glen, remained with the Huron system until their retirement in 1961.

View the 35 minute film *The Books Drive On* on YouTube [at this link](#).

My blog on the *Library on Wheels*, the 1945 Fraser Valley bookmobile film, is [at this link](#).

My blog on two later Canadian bookmobile films is [at this link](#).

Friday, April 25, 2025

Canadian School Libraries and Books for Youth Forum at Winnipeg, 1949

School Library Development in Postwar Canada, 1945–50

Attention to school library work and better cooperation between public libraries and schools increased after the Second World War. While many libraries in secondary schools were satisfactory and there were a few outstanding ones, small classroom collections prevailed in elementary schools. For example, at a rural school in Brechin just outside Nanaimo, British Columbia, each classroom featured a small library with books supplied by the Vancouver Island Union Library.

Teachers frequently were in charge of these collections, although a few trained teacher-librarians supervised activities in some places. Larger public libraries, such as Toronto and Vancouver, led the way in providing collections for schools to use and promoted their services in children's libraries or special rooms for teenagers. In the case of Vancouver, elementary schools could borrow recreational books to augment their own collections from a central collection in the public library's school department. Schools provided library rooms and teacher-librarians, while the public library, under the direction of Isabel McTavish, acquired, catalogued, and distributed the books.

Although the war years had stalled school library development, after the formation of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in 1946, services for children received more consideration. The Canadian Association of Children's Librarians (established in 1939) became a constituent section of CLA with the ambitious goal of promoting reading on a national scale. The group established a Book of the Year Award in 1947 to highlight worthy Canadian authors or books published in Canada. Two years later, CLA launched Young Canada's Book Week in November 1949 to encourage reading for young Canadians. In

1950, a CLA Youth Interest Group to address teenage readers became an official section of CLA



Children reading in a classroom library
Brechin, British Columbia, c.1944

Because it was commonplace for public libraries to supply schools with reading materials after the war, the idea of ‘children’ or ‘youth’ was broadly construed. Elementary school children and younger teenagers were often considered collectively following the example of the American Library Association Division of Libraries for Children and Young People established in 1941 for schools, children, and public librarians. By 1940, the Ontario Library Association had already formed two separate official sections: a ‘children’s librarians’ group and a ‘school and intermediate libraries’ group for teachers and librarians engaged in high school work. These sections sometimes worked collaboratively and their members often attended sessions together at the OLA annual conference. Consequently, many school librarians readily adapted the public library concept of promoting ‘good reading’ as the alternative to series books, comics, or poor quality writers.

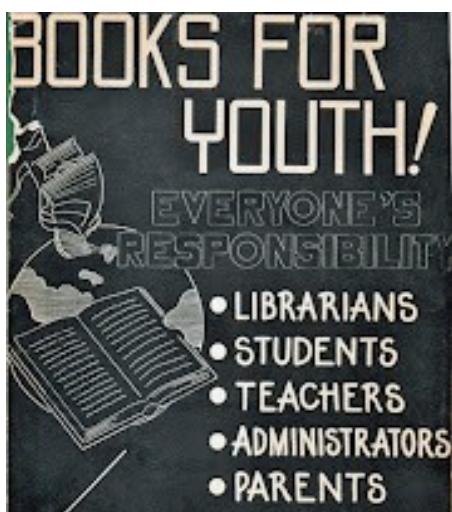
After the war, the CLA took the lead on the national stage. Most school libraries were often simply collections of books where keener students might find reading materials. Now, school libraries were assuming a workshop or service point role where students and classes could gather to discover resources to enrich their experiences. The new library approach attempted to further research, curriculum enrichment, independent study, and recreational reading. Many librarians felt the best way to discover what young people were reading was to make friends with them and listen carefully. Then, they could find out what they were thinking about, what they were reading, and discuss books more satisfactorily. As part of the CLA 1949 annual meeting in Manitoba, a subsequent two-day forum of ideas was planned to discuss youth services in more detail. The focus was on current practices in school librarianship, not collections or facilities.

The Institute on School Library Work was held on June 24–25 at the Manitoba Legislature under the direction of Amelia Munson, New York Public Library. She was quite experienced in working with youth and an entertaining speaker. She taught at Columbia University on the reading interests of adolescents for almost two decades and inspired a generation of students, such as Louise Riley, who earned her MA in LS at Columbia in 1942 and made children's work in the Calgary Public Library a model for other libraries in Alberta. Although Munson was nearing the end of her career, she became widely known for her handbook on young adult services, *An Ample Field: Books and Young People*, published in 1950 by the American Library Association.

The Institute on School Library Work, Winnipeg, June 1949

The proceedings and discussions held in four sessions at the Manitoba Legislature were published as *Books for Youth: Everyone's Responsibility; School Library Institute Proceedings, June 24-25, 1949, Winnipeg, Manitoba* by the CLA in 1949. Amelia Munson addressed her audience on the subject of the pleasures of reading and the responsibilities of librarians three times:

- “Growth through Reading”
- “What Books? For Whom?”
- “Who, Me?”



The first general address at the beginning of the meeting revealed Munson's extensive literary background with English and American authors from Shakespeare to Robert Frost. She felt that if a person actively read compelling, cultivated literature that spanned many issues and many periods of time, then the possibility of personal growth surely existed.

If without reservation, with all that is in us, we can associate ourselves with such high matters, with such great comparisons, how can we fail to grow—in understanding, in compassion, in integrity? And it is such a simple matter, really. But we need occasionally to have our attention drawn to it. “Men need in general,” says Dr. Johnson, “not so much to be informed as to be reminded.” That is what I have been trying to do tonight.

Hélène Grenier, the head of the Teachers' Library for the Montreal Catholic School Commission, closed the opening session by reiterating the critical roles librarians and teachers played in the lives of youngsters. The Director's address at the second general session the next morning dealt with the demanding challenge of mastering a diverse range of reading interests and readers' abilities.

When I think of the voracious reading of adolescents, I do not have a picture of a mass of young people steadily and single-

mindedly devouring a book, as an army of grasshoppers crunches its way through a wheat field. ... Not all of them are readers, of course, as we think of readers. Some are ‘reluctant’ and some are ‘rebellious,’ but I hesitate to call any of them non-readers. I should prefer to say they are all potential non-readers, unless we do something about it.

Personal and professional responsibility was her focus: “I believe one’s first duty is to be a real person—then, perhaps, a professional one.” She insisted that librarians were important intermediaries between the world of books and reading with students and young persons.

It is for us to see to it that the vital line of communication between the great spirits of the past and the eager, questing spirits of today remains unbroken, it is our function to brush aside the obstacles that confront contemporary readers and give them direct access to the mind and heart of the writer; and it is our obligation, an obligation that rests heavily upon us for we deal with materials “too dear for our possessing,” and yet an obligation that it is a delight to fulfil, to find some way of sharing that richness.

Small discussion groups were formed during this session. Then reports were made when the groups returned to a general assembly. One concern that merited special consideration was the ‘retarded’ reader, today an outdated term which would be replaced in subsequent decades by youngsters experiencing ‘reading disorders’ or ‘reading difficulty.’ Each individual required careful consideration, and by using attractive books or story-telling techniques, and by exploring personal interests, the child might begin to like reading. Discovering the interests of ‘rebellious’ readers was another challenge requiring individual attention. Finally, ‘resourceful’ readers who read widely and were capable of finding information on their own, could be guided to resources beyond the school library and encouraged to expand their reading interest. Finding a young person’s interests and building upon them was the key to a successful relationship with students.

Lyle Evans, the supervisor of school libraries for the Saskatchewan Department of Education, led the third session. She called upon all participants to outline how they organized their collections and how students could be helped to achieve better reading levels and enjoy reading. Teachers and librarians presented a variety of current methods: Story Telling — Book Talks — Student Helpers — Library Clubs — Work with Individuals — Classroom Libraries — Audio-Visual Aids — Radio Broadcasts in Schools — Picture Collections — Exhibits. In the subsequent discussion, films, plays, puppet shows, and collaboration with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation also came under consideration.

The final evening session featured presentations on responsibility in a school setting. Again, Amelia Munson offered inspiration about the merits of reading for young people:

For though changes—revolutionary changes—occur in thinking and in conduct, in science and philosophy, even in human nature, the needs and the satisfaction of the human spirit remains constant. ... There must always be heights for the aspiring spirit; whether they be in Nature, in Art, in Philosophy, in Religion is not of much concern.

Four speakers described their work at this session. Lyle Evans talked about the role of the teacher-librarian in the educational program in relation to the resources of libraries or classroom collections in schools. They might work as instructors but were managers with the difficult goal of developing a love of reading regardless of resource limitations. The role of school principals was also important as well for they chose the school library leaders, designated space(s) for collections, and provided funding within their budgets. District superintendents, such as Herbert McIntosh in Winnipeg, oversaw developments on a broader scale and liaised with educational officials across an entire province. He said schools were tax-supported institutions and the public “should know why a school needs a library and what it does with it.” In conclusion, the role of elected school board trustees was briefly touched on, and questions were raised

about library plans for development in the Winnipeg school system.

In the closing appreciation, all members were urged to participate in the forthcoming Young Canada's Book Week/Semaine du livre pour la jeunesse canadienne, which would be held for the first time. Among the 106 registrants, there were influential leaders in children's and school library work nationwide. Almost half the participants were from Manitoba, led by Eleanor Boyce, Manitoba Inspector of Schools, and Myrtle Lewis, Manitoba Department of Education Library. A few other prominent names in school library work included Alvine Bélisle (École Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Montreal), Louise Riley (Calgary Public Library), Margaret Fraser (Galt Collegiate Institute), Kathleen Dolan (Sir Adam Beck Collegiate in London), Isabel McTavish (Vancouver Public Library), and Elizabeth Mott (Baron Byng High School in Montreal).

At mid-century, school library work was taking place in ten separate provincial education systems summarized by a 1951 Canadian Education Association report: "The increasing attention which departments of education are giving to school libraries, in the provision of expert advice and recommendations, books, and funds, and the instruction in the use of the library which is being introduced into schools are indications of the recognition of the importance of the library to the school program." Like their counterparts in public libraries, school libraries sought to impart an appreciation of literature with the added responsibility to instruct students in library methods. It was an optimistic outlook, but at the start of the 1950s and for many years ahead, school librarianship and teacher-librarians continued to be a minority voice in public library-oriented associations and departments of education across the country.

The 1949 workshop marked a step forward in thinking about school librarianship. During the subsequent decade, library groupings devoted to youth services, children's work, and school libraries divided librarians' attention while educational officials, principals, and teachers struggled to cope with increasing

enrollments due to the baby boom after 1945. It would be ten years before CLA organized another successful two-day national conference on school librarianship held in Edmonton in 1959.

The Library Service in the Schools Workshop held in Edmonton in 1959 is the subject of [my previous blog](#).

Canadian school library development at mid-century is subject of a [previous post](#).

Two talks by Marshall McLuhan to Ontario librarians in the 1950s is a post [at this link](#).

Sunday, April 06, 2025

From Library Work to Library Science: Canadian Librarianship, 1920–1960

Canadian librarianship was formed incrementally and was loosely structured in the first half of the twentieth century when it emerged as a modern professional career. Librarianship coalesced around the broader field of an emerging academic discipline, library science, an expanding range of professional specialties (e.g., children's librarianship or special library work), increasingly technical aspects related to acquiring and organizing different types of resources and offering readers and other clients assistance and information. For the most part, librarians in various settings sought to develop an intermediary role between their clientele and the world of print. They did so when library science evolved as a university-based discipline grounded in the knowledge and techniques of collecting, organizing, and managing records for public use. In 2019, I examined three significant issues on this topic in an article [From Library Work to Library Science](#) in *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 14 (1), 1–41. It is freely available and provides a more detailed discussion of the issues summarized in this blog: the primacy of a service ethic, the question of acceptable library education and training, and issues surrounding the profession's female intensity during first-wave feminism before 1960.

After 1920, Canadian librarians benefited from adopting a service philosophy, the evolution of higher educational qualifications, improved workplace methods, and the formation of associations which offered self-improvement and advancement of libraries. The aims of improved service for an expanded reading public, development of bibliographic methods, and connecting people with books were constant goals in the small, female-intensive Canadian library community. Librarians began to position themselves as educated, reliable, and unselfish professionals who fulfilled their users' information needs. Even

though they were employed in various institutional roles with a diverse clientele and administrative structures that made overarching consensus difficult, librarians believed they were achieving standing as a ‘professional librarian’ and reserving for themselves the idea of self-managed careers that suited a variety of employment settings.

Over four decades, Canadian librarianship evolved progressively from elementary library training after WWI to the career-oriented, service-minded librarian underpinned by the academic subject of library science in the early 1960s. The service orientation was tailored to suit the needs of users and communities. Accordingly, librarianship could claim a general societal role of connecting people with resources and information using trusted professional expertise. Canada’s foremost spokesperson for librarians in the first part of the 20th century, George Locke, was confident on this score. In speaking to University of Toronto students in 1932 he declared, “So long as we are a democracy we need intelligence; so long as we need intelligence in the community we need librarians; so we shall need librarians to the end of Time.”

A service profession

A service philosophy was already ingrained in library work by 1920, so its adoption by a growing number of librarians presented no difficulty. In 1919, Mary J.L. Black, chief librarian at Fort William Public Library (now Thunder Bay), prioritized her thoughts about successful contemporary librarianship: (1) the spirit of service, (2) a knowledge of people, (3) a knowledge of books, (4) an acquaintance with library technique and business training. In the same year, Mabel Dunham, chief librarian at Kitchener Public Library, encouraged young female university graduates to display “the splendid spirit of unselfish service for others” in their daily library work. In 1926, Edgar Robinson, Vancouver’s chief librarian, declared, “For freedom of activity and opportunity for expression of individuality through service, library work has no equal.” Three decades later, when the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and

Sciences (the Massey Commission) considered the state of local Canadian libraries, it recognized that “librarians must know their books and how to care for them; they must also know their community and how to serve it.” Public service became a keynote of librarianship as it emerged slowly as a self-directed profession in Canada before the dramatic social, educational, and cultural changes of the 1960s.

Library Science and professional training

Education and training were crucial ingredients in the development of Canadian librarianship. McGill University and the University of Toronto established graduate library degree programs in the 1920s and benefited from improved accreditation programs instituted by the American Library Association in the 1930s. By the 1960s, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) confirmed that a graduate with a two-term bachelor’s degree in library science (the BLS) was the standard requirement to gain entry into the profession. At its November meeting in 1959, the CLA Council adopted the following statement concerning a “fully qualified professional librarian:” (1) the equivalent of the BA degree as granted in Canada and (2) proof of library training equivalent to that required for the BLS in Canada or master’s (MLS) in the United States, (3) persons with less training employed in Canada may be limited in professional advancement. Of course, some ambitious students pursued library degrees in prestigious American schools, such as Columbia, which held more extensive collections. After the Carnegie Corporation of New York began funding fellowship grants for library work in 1929, 19 librarians working in Canada received \$32,100 between 1931–42 to further their studies outside of Canada. When American library schools began replacing the BLS after 1948 with a one-year master’s degree as the first entry into librarianship, Toronto (1951) and McGill (1956) followed suit, although they required students to first possess a BLS. Throughout this period, library education blended a humanistic public-spirited service and print-oriented stewardship to librarianship centred around a popular slogan: “If you like people, you like books.”



McGill University Summer Library School Students,
Banff, Alberta, 1941

The discipline of library science provided librarians with a core expertise combined with techniques to manage libraries and assist users that was mostly aligned with humanistic values. Librarians were inclined to interpret ‘scientific’ in the sense of employing orderly practices and managing efficiency in the cause of public service. A nebulous ‘philosophy of librarianship’ often sufficed in place of principled statements on issues such as censorship, which was a typically muted subject. Librarianship exhibited a combination of cultural stewardship of printed resources and social service allied with managerial efficiency to serve a variety of clientele. As such, it emerged slowly as a self-directed profession in Canada before the dramatic social, educational, and cultural changes of the 1960s.

A Woman’s Profession

A hallmark of librarianship is its female-intensity. A British woman working at Toronto Public Library in the late 1920s noted the unmistakable gendered landscape of Canadian libraries: 2 men managed a staff of 150 women, although nearly every small town was run by a woman. Gendered perceptions obscured the steady progress libraries and librarians were making during first-wave feminism. Although men were usually

chief librarians in major cities, such as Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal, almost all public libraries in small cities were headed by women. Two cities, Windsor and Hamilton, were led by women who became presidents of the CLA. The war years helped fortify the idea that women could perform equally as well as men. Accounts of library work by Elizabeth Loosley in 1945 depicting challenges at an air force station, and by Monica Hodges in 1946 describing difficulties in naval libraries, disproved the notion that women could not cope with demanding situations. After the war, women in all sectors of librarianship proved their worth as managers, belying the convention that the highest appointments should be reserved for men. In the 1950s, CLA promoted librarianship as a career for intelligent, active professionals of advanced university standing. Because societal stereotypes shaped librarianship, Roma Harris in *Librarianship: The Erosion of a Woman's Profession* (1992) argued that the intermediary role centering on the client's need rather than the expertise of the librarian was not fully appreciated due to female intensity. As well, a case can be made that the small number of librarians hampered efforts to achieve enhanced status as a profession: graduate numbers were perennially low between 1931–65. The 1931 Canadian census reported 1,009 librarians as a separate professional category subdivided into 6 groupings. The 1961 census reported a tripling to 3,460 librarians subdivided by 12 subcategories. Obviously, librarianship was a small field at the outset of the 1960s. Gendered problems, especially the ‘pay gap’ and the ‘glass ceiling,’ remained low-key issues until second-wave feminism surfaced in earnest after the federal government’s Royal Commission on the Status of Women issued its report in December 1970 and societal norms began to change.

Collective Action

Before 1920, there were only two provincial library associations: Ontario (1900) and British Columbia (1911). Before the end of WW II, Québec (1932), the Maritimes (1935), Manitoba (1936), Saskatchewan (1942), and Alberta (1944) formed associations. Smaller groups were also established. Special librarians formed

two chapters, one in Montreal (1932) and one in Toronto (1940). Children's librarians launched their own national association in 1939 and l'Association canadienne des bibliothèques catholiques formed in 1943 (changed to Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française in 1948). These provided the basis for collective action and personal growth. Canada was known to be a country of regional diversity and it was not until the postwar era that a national voice, the CLA, emerged. This association allowed libraries and librarians to clarify and advocate for particular issues, improve individual expertise, form groups to engage in specialist development, recognize commonalities of purpose beyond local and provincial scales, and support the public interest. CLA was a decisive force in creating a National Library in 1953 and promoting librarianship on a national scale. As librarianship became more specialized, CLA created specific sections in the 1950s. Shortly after 1960, two major divisions formed: the Canadian School Library Association (1961) and the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (1963). The Canadian Association of Law Libraries separated from its American counterpart in 1963. Thereafter, the tendency to create small, specialized or local library bodies accelerated, and national considerations lessened.

Beyond the 1960s

The achievement of status as a minor profession was gradual during the depression and war years, with an upturn in the postwar era. Canadian librarians chose to pursue informal, flexible professionalization by assuming a service philosophy, elaborating educational standards, establishing standardized workplace methods, and developing collective action by in multiple associations. The postwar era featured economic growth, population increases, more intensive research, and educational and social conditions that warranted the need for libraries to supply published resources and new media. Yet, at the outset of the 1960s, the future, not the current foundation, engaged the attention of library educators, practitioners, and associations. A growing number of library science educators began introducing new subject matter into curricula related to

research methods, abstracting, literature searching, and methods of information retrieval. In January 1958, the CLA organized a successful conference on documentation techniques at McGill University. In the following decade, it became evident that the emerging discipline of information science required librarians to consider more specialized ideas and training.

There was less reliance on library tradition, especially relationships with print resources. The characteristics of new media that impacted society, famously condensed to “the medium is the message” by Marshall McLuhan in the mid-1960s, presented challenges to the book-centred knowledge espoused by librarians. Second-wave feminism opposed gender inequality and negative stereotypes, but significant progress in libraries would have to await a sharper focus on disparities by the ‘four-fifths minority’ in the 1970s. As before, the evolution of Canadian librarianship continued professionally with the value of service at the forefront together with newer ideas, such as intellectual freedom, and areas of concern, such as literacy. Issues would become broader, less concerned with the printed formats and their organization and more focused on computer technology. The beginning of the merger of librarianship and the information professional was underway. After 1960, as the core knowledge of librarians began to transition to library and information science, they would adopt new professional values and confront social issues in a more forthright way as the computer era and more assertive feminism began to take hold.

Mabel Dunham and librarianship as a profession for women is the subject of my [previous blog](#).

My blog post on an early 1936 Canadian library textbook on library science is [at this link](#).

The development of a library profession in Ontario is the subject of my [previous blog](#).

The development of post-secondary libraries and librarianship after WW II is the subject of my [previous blog](#).

The Carnegie program to finance Canadian college collections in the 1930s is the subject of my [previous blog](#).

Two theses on Canadian academic librarianship in the 1940s are the subject of [my previous blog](#).

Tuesday, April 01, 2025

Professionalization and Librarianship in Ontario, 1920–1975

There is general agreement that librarianship is a profession (or semi-profession), distinct from an occupation. Over time, it has constructed its diverse character in Britain, the United States, and Canada. For five decades until 1975, librarians in the province of Ontario sought to emulate the popular ‘trait model’ of professionalism to institutionalize legal recognition and to secure advanced social status. I believe these attempts to achieve a distinctive status may be characterized as a ‘professional project,’ the process whereby an occupation seeks to institutionalize legal recognition and improve its social standing.

The Trait Theory and Professionalism

The trait theory comprises common characteristics that Ontario librarians felt were useful in the identification of a profession in the early part of the 20th century, attributes such as:

- A formal education process for entry into a profession;
- A base of specialized knowledge, skills, and training used in work;
- Ethical principles and standards guiding practitioners;
- A service commitment in the performance of duties;
- Self-regulation by a recognized professional organization.

Ultimately, efforts by Ontario librarians were unsuccessful and they had turned away from the trait features by the mid-1970s. They were able to realize some characteristics, such as advanced educational standing and a service orientation; however, the small total number of librarians, their fluctuating leadership goals for self-regulation, and the provincial government’s preference to rein in the authority of professions became decisive barriers to achieving formal professional status. I wrote at length

on this period of history in a paper published in *Library and Information History* more than a dozen years ago, in 2012. Complete details are available as a PDF at this link:

[Professionalization and Librarianship in Ontario, 1920–75](#). A summary review of the pursuit of the trait theory after 1920 illustrates there were difficulties in establishing unity due to conflicting goals, gender issues, a relatively small cohort of participants, and institutional constraints of a ‘managed profession’ among the four groupings (schools, special and public libraries, as well as college and universities). These issues were major constraints in securing the collective goal of a self-regulating body of professional librarians sanctioned by provincial legislation.

There was significant progress in identity formation, to be sure, during 1920–75. In the immediate decade following the First World War, librarians loosely structured the idea of a profession. Ontario was a small library stage offering few roles outside Toronto. The most notable feature of librarianship after 1920 was the predominance of young, university-trained females, a feature Mabel Dunham addressed in her Ontario Library Association (OLA) 1921 presidential address that was the subject of [my earlier blog post in 2022](#). After the establishment in 1928 of a one-year academic program at the University of Toronto, women were drawn in growing numbers to library positions created in Ontario, thus forming the argument that librarianship was a ‘woman’s profession’ beset by low pay and inferior prestige. Still, library science remained a comparatively small field of study compared to other disciplines. An undergraduate bachelor’s degree (BLS) and eventually by 1970 a master’s degree (MLS) became established standards for entry into the profession. After the Second World War, the Ontario Department of Education linked provincial grants to public libraries with certification of librarians to recognize higher educational standards. Certification was regarded by public librarians as a step forward in seeking professional status; however, it ceased in 1972 after the viewpoint that professional standards were maintained by the entrance requirements of

graduate library schools and by accreditation reviews by Canadian and American library associations prevailed.

As the number of university-trained graduates increased, an OLA Professional Committee was formed in 1955. This group provided the opportunity to advance the cause of professionalism. By 1960, the Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario had incorporated as a separate entity (IPLO), attracting librarians working in all types of libraries. Its stated aims were: (1) to promote library service and increase public interest in its professional aspects; (2) to raise the standard of

library services by defining and upholding standards of professional qualifications; (3) to promote the prestige, welfare, and interests of librarians; and (4) to cooperate with other organizations with similar objectives. IPLO reserved membership for qualified librarians according to its constitution. Its attempt to form a professional body with potential licensing and self-monitoring for librarians occurred when there was tremendous expansion in Ontario's schools, universities, and colleges. On the other hand,



many new library associations began to represent the interests of librarians, thus diminishing IPLO's membership drives on a province-wide footing. The Institute never registered more than 500 members. As interest dwindled, it eventually disbanded in 1976. Reliance on the trait theory of professionalism had run its course. Greg Linnell gives a complete account of IPLO's history in a 2008 article at this link: [IPLO](#).

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of major societal and economic change. For librarians, who now embraced the term 'professional librarian,' perhaps the most important issues were

the adoption of intellectual freedom principles, gender considerations, collective bargaining, and the proliferation of library associations. As well, there was more clarity about the roles of professionals and non-professionals in libraries. Library technician graduates from new community college programs assumed many tasks formerly undertaken by librarians. The challenge of automation and information technology would result in the formation of ‘systems’ departments and employment of IT experts within libraries. These trends absorbed the attention of librarians resulting in a declining concern about professional status.

Traditionally, librarians were conservative voices in censorship debates because they were salaried employees and decisions usually were beyond their control. They seldom spoke out in opposition to controversies related to book selection. ‘The right book for the right reader’ served as a watchword for decades. Substituting a good book for a bad book was a common rationale when controversies arose. Too often, however, the stance of neutrality shielded the common practice of using restricted shelves for objectionable (but legally published) books. These attitudes began to change after the OLA adopted a statement on intellectual freedom in 1963. By doing so, the association was confirming a new role for librarians that would eventually lead to annual campaigns promoting Freedom to Read.

When second-generation feminism began to take hold after the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada published its report in 1970, female librarians began reconsidering their place in the profession. Often, women were being passed over for major positions and the phrase the ‘four-fifths majority’ gained adherents who demanded merited promotions, improved salaries equal to male counterparts, and benefits such as maternity leave. These were issues that would continue to be wrestled with for some time. The gender underpinning of librarianship has been regarded as a significant factor contributing to the lack of recognition of librarianship as a profession in many studies. Still, its effect in transforming policies and improving working conditions in libraries after 1975

is undoubtedly more important. Librarians jettisoned suspicion of unions and began to embrace public sector collective bargaining in public libraries, the post-secondary sector, and schools.

A New Search for Professionalism after 1975

The ‘type-of-library’ organizational preference developed in the 1960s became entrenched in the 1970s as OLA and CLA restructured to better serve members’ interests. New associations were professionally tailored towards careers in colleges and universities, public libraries, special libraries, and schools. Librarians’ interests began to centre on personal professional development in local settings instead of a more collective profession on a provincial scale that IPLO had exemplified. Librarians began to pursue individual, discretionary claims to professional status by utilizing concepts associated with other information-management professionals and integrating these ideas within librarianship. A new model with identifiable characteristics and advantages would need to be created for professionalization to prevail. Collectively, from 1920 to 1975, some achievements, such as consensus about formal educational qualifications or intellectual freedom, had laid the foundation for better educational qualifications and principles that continue to resonate in librarianship.

From the 1970s to today it is possible to discern a new ‘discretionary’ or ‘alternative’ model of professionalism and collective identity that is adaptable to individual preferences and different types of organizations where librarians are employed. The features of this type of professionalism include:

- the evolution of an educational framework from library science to library and information science;
- acceptance by librarians of their inherent diversity shaped by ‘type of library’ activities and variety of clientele;
- the retention of collective bargaining that took hold in the 1970s;

- the acknowledgement of the integration of organizational work in libraries with other professionals possessing different credentials;
- a commitment to the principle of intellectual freedom;
- informal, discretionary recognition of common aspirations identified by library associations;
- a personal autonomy built upon knowledge, skills, and common bonds of the profession.

There has been an increasing tendency for all professionals to work in integrated, bureaucratic organizations in the public and private sectors in the late 20th century—hospitals, government, corporations, schools, libraries—instead of remaining independent. In *The System of Professions* in 1988, the sociologist Andrew Abbott placed librarianship within a grouping of information professions. Librarians work in conjunction with other professionals who perform different types of work within organizations that recognize multiple credentials. This flexible conceptualization turns its back on formally adopting characteristics associated with the trait theory of professions by proposing a ‘federated’ framework. Certainly, librarians share some common goals with information scientists, archivists, and records managers. It seems one constant is that librarians will continue to adjust their vision of professionalism to the expectations between an individual’s perspective in an informal community devoted to librarianship and their identification within an organization.

My blog on the development of librarianship in Canada from 1920 to 1960 is [at this link](#).

Mabel Dunham and her concept of librarianship as a profession for women in 1921 is [at this link](#).

Friday, March 21, 2025

Special Libraries Organize in Montreal and Toronto, 1930–1945

Special Libraries in Canada

The special library was amongst the first libraries to appear in 18th century Canada with the creation of a small book collection in the l'Hôpital général de Québec in 1726. In the early 19th century, important collections were established in Montreal, such as the Advocates' Library (1828) and libraries for the McGill College Medical Library (founded 1829) and the Natural History Society (founded 1825). Other libraries were developed for prominent legal, literary and scientific organizations in the following decades: the Quebec Literary and Historical Society (founded 1824) in Quebec City, the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Royal Canadian Institute established by mid-century in Toronto. In the first decades of the 20th century, growth continued to serve more formal organizations such as the Academy of Medicine (1907) in Toronto, which came under the direction of Margaret Ridley Charlton, and the Royal Bank of Canada (1913) in Montreal. Throughout this lengthy period, of course, government libraries built significant collections in provincial legislatures and in Ottawa.

The concept of a special library—collections and staff to serve governments, businesses, professional groups, public institutions such as hospitals, and a wide variety of organizations—coalesced in the early decades of the 20th century, especially after the formation of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) in 1909 in the United States and the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (1924) in Britain. The primary aims of the special library ‘movement’ in these countries generally focused on services to collect and evaluate current publications and research; to organize relevant written, unpublished or peripheral information; and to assemble and disseminate publications, information, and data (often in abstract

or memorandum form) to advance individual or group work within organizations. In an era when most American and British librarians were concerned with public library progress, special librarians focused on the information process within their organization. They paid particular attention to the needs of their users, often employing non-traditional methods not taught in library schools.

Special librarians shared some ideas in common with an early 20th century European field of study, ‘Documentation.’



Bank of Canada Library, Research Dept., Ottawa, c.1944

Documentalists were concerned with any type of record and or evolving technology with the potential for providing pertinent information to further the aims of an organization or researchers. They were especially interested in building scientific indexes, the organization of subject literature, and the techniques of improving information retrieval. But, for the most part, special librarians remained oriented to providing typical library reference service through their usual resources. Indeed, this trend is evident from the activity in Canadian special libraries and

publications of leading figures before the end of the Second World War.

In Canada, special library work was in a nascent stage. When American special librarians came to meet in Toronto with the American Library Association convention at Toronto in June 1927, William O. Carson, the Ontario Inspector of Public Libraries, wrote in the summer issue of *Special Libraries*, “If there is any definition of a special library which includes all that it is and excludes all that it is not, I have never heard it.” He went on to elaborate saying, “Speaking frankly the special library ideal has not taken hold in this country in a large way; that is, we have not gone far in the establishment of highly specialized, representative collections of books and related material, organized and operated according to the niceties and exactitudes of modern library science.” In the same June issue, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission in Toronto reported a typical library activity: keeping engineering staff posted on new developments, routing of government reports and technical publications to departments for circulation, and maintaining about 90 journals and the publications of 30 technical societies in a growing library that used the Dewey Decimal classification. Another contributor, an economist from the Royal Bank in Montreal, emphasized the importance of maintaining library data from current sources related to railroad earnings, freight loadings, automobile production, newsprint, steel, flour, as well as employment and building statistics, in order to make accurate assessments for banking executives.

Special Library Growth in Montreal and Toronto

In the late 1920s, Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto were emerging centres where special library work was becoming more important when businesses and government were expanding. There was a marked increase in libraries serving insurance, banking, and other commercial enterprises, along with the development of legislative and departmental libraries at the provincial and federal levels. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics *Statistical Survey of Canadian Libraries* in 1929–30 identified

59 government and 59 special libraries each as separate categories. Special libraries were “commercial and technical libraries, which include those of business corporations as well as those belonging to historical or scientific societies, law societies, literary and art organizations or those of a similar nature,” and reported holdings of 464,885 items. The three largest special libraries reporting more than 25,000 items were the Royal Canadian Institute in Toronto, the New Brunswick Provincial Museum in St. John, and the Royal Society of Canada in Ottawa. In its next survey, 1930–31, the federal department combined the two groups and reported there were 132 government, technical society, and business libraries with 2,292,899 volumes, which combined represented 31 percent more books than public libraries. The vast majority of these books, of course, were held by governments, with the Library of Parliament alone holding 400,000 volumes.

Some notable librarians in the 1930–31 survey for Montreal would reappear over the next decades: Maréchal Nantel (Advocates’ Library), Olive B. Le Boutillier (Art Association of Montreal, now the Montreal Museum of Fine Art), and Mary Jane Henderson (Sun Life Insurance). Nantel was a lawyer, writer, historian, librarian of the Bar of Montreal, and a prominent figure in the Société des Dix for many years. Olive Le Boutillier was active in Montreal art circles for many years. Mary Jane Henderson became a driving force in special library work in Montreal and a familiar face in the SLA. After earning a BA at Queen’s University in 1925, she acquired a BLS from the Library School at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, in the following year. Then she gained experience as a cataloguer at Columbia University and joined SLA’s New York Chapter before returning to Montreal in 1930 to organize Sun Life’s investment library. She was inducted into the SLA Hall of Fame in 1964 in recognition of her service to the profession.

In the decade of the 1930s, despite the setback of the Great Depression, Montreal was the business and financial metropolitan centre of Canada. At this time, cooperative efforts were greatly encouraged, and at the beginning of 1932, a small

committee of special librarians meeting at McGill University decided to form a special libraries chapter of the SLA. Mary Jane Henderson, the librarian of Sun Life Assurance Company, became their leader and was elected president of the Montreal chapter at its first meeting on May 9, 1932. There were 19 members at this time and the first project the chapter chose was to publish a *Directory of Special Libraries in Montreal* in 1933 that detailed hours of opening, personnel, volumes, periodicals, telephone, and other operational details. The chapter's quarterly *Bulletin* first appeared in January 1935 edited by Beatrice V. Simon, the McGill University medical librarian. As its membership grew, the chapter requested SLA hold its annual convention in Montreal. The 28th annual conference of the Special Libraries Association was held in Montreal at the Mount Royal Hotel in June 1936. Henderson was in charge of organizing local arrangements and organized a successful program under the theme, "Putting Knowledge to Work," for the 1936 conference, which was the subject of [my earlier blog](#).

The Montreal chapter participated in the inter-provincial library conference in Ottawa in 1937. Members from the Ontario and Quebec library associations held a session on cooperation between public and special libraries. Beatrice Simon, McGill University Medical Library and Mildrid Turnbull, the Royal Bank of Canada librarian in Montreal, spoke about efforts to avoid duplication and to use interloan. T.V. Mounteer, from the Bell Telephone Co. in Montreal, reprised his address on cooperative opportunities between industrial libraries and educational resources of the public library, a speech later published earlier in *Special Libraries*.

Although it appeared that the outbreak of war in 1939 would halt the progress of library growth, in fact, in early 1940, three librarians formed a plan to establish an SLA Toronto Chapter. Pauline Mary Hutchison, librarian of Canada Life Assurance, Peter Morgan, librarian of the Confederation Life Association, and Allan McKenzie, librarian of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. They called for a meeting in May where ten people

approved a decision to request chapter status, which the SLA approved that summer.

The first regular meeting of the chapter was held at the Staff House of the Toronto Public Library on September 17, 1940, with Pauline Hutchison as the chair. The organization soon attracted new members, among them George A. Johnson (Law

AIRWOMEN'S LIBRARY AIDED

The Toronto Special Libraries association is assisting the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) No. 2 composite depot on Jarvis St. in organizing its library and is collecting books and money to add to the library. The Special Libraries association is made up of libraries from business and professional organizations, such as insurance companies, banks, newspapers, etc.

Society of Upper Canada), Edna Poole (Academy of Medicine), Grace Pincoe (Art Gallery of Toronto, now Art Gallery of Ontario), and Allan McKenzie of the Canadian Bank of Commerce.

Toronto Daily Star April 15, 1943

The chapter's first bulletin was published in January 1941, and a wartime project, the Air Force library, began in January 1943. Members, under the direction of Mary Silverthorn and her Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division Committee, sorted and arranged books in the division depot and collected, by purchase and donation, hundreds of other books and magazines, both technical and recreational that were sorted and catalogued at the Confederation Life Association and returned at the depot for distribution. The chapter's wartime meetings continued with some prominent speakers. Grace Pincoe spoke on the Art Gallery of Toronto collection and its activities and Margaret Avision, who later became a distinguished poet, spoke about "Everything about Something" and her work at the Canadian Institute of International Affairs Library in the later stages of the war before she accepted a position at the University of Toronto library. Marie Tremaine spoke on "Can you tell me? Please," a thoughtful piece on typical reference work with the public she experienced at the Toronto Public Library. She would become one of the founding members of the Bibliographical Society of Canada in 1946.

The Postwar Future and Special Libraries

By the war's end, the DBS *Survey of Libraries* for 1946–48 indicated the progress of all groupings of special libraries after 1930. There were now 173 in total: 83 federal and provincial, 36 business, 13 law, 22 technical and professional, and 19 'other' (e.g., libraries for the blind) with a reported 110 trained staff in library science. The initiative and enthusiasm of the two Canadian chapters and their members, active forces in Canadian and Special librarianship, could reasonably be credited for some of this growth. Some members, such as Janet Saunders, a graduate of Queen's University (BA 1918) who worked at the International Labour Office library in Montreal during the war, pursued successful library careers beyond Canada. The Montreal chapter president in 1942, Catherine Anne Pearce (BLS McGill 1936), earned her masters in library science at the University of Illinois in 1947 and began working for the Transportation Association of America in Chicago and later the Richfield Oil Co. in Los Angeles. The two chapters also attracted members in smaller Canadian cities and in western Canada from Winnipeg as far as Victoria and Trail, BC. In the postwar period, the chapters would participate in a series of joint regional conferences with their SLA American counterparts in the Western New York Chapter in 1947–49. Several years later, in 1953, the Toronto Chapter would host the SLA annual conference in Toronto.

My blog post on the 1936 Special Libraries conference at Montreal is available [at this link](#).

In 2003, [Margaret Ridley Charlton](#) was designated as a person of national historic significance.

Some useful publications during this period include:

Marvin, Donald M. "Relationship of the Library and Research Departments to the Bank." *Special Libraries* 18 (Sept. 1927): 215–219.

Nantel, Maréchal. "The Advocates' Library and the Montreal Bar." *Law Library Journal* 27 (July 1934): 75–97.

- Mounteer, T.V. "The Special Library: Partner in Industrial Education." *Special Libraries* 27 (Nov. 1936): 298–301.
- Morgan, Peter. "On Becoming a Special Librarian." *Special Libraries* 28 (March 1937): 87–90.
- Le Boutillier, Olive B. "The Clipping File in an Art Library." *Special Libraries* 31 (April 1940): 131–132.
- Pincoe, Grace. "A Trip to Study Methods in American Art Museum Libraries." *Bulletin of the Toronto Chapter, Special Libraries Association* 2 (May 1942): [3-4].
- Saunders, Janet F. "Development of the International Labour Office Library." *Special Libraries* 33 (Oct. 1942): 290–294.
- "The Special Library in Canada." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 19 (Nov. 1944): 195–197.
- Saunders, Janet F. "S.L.A. International Relations." *Special Libraries* 35 (Dec. 1944): 490–493.
- McKenzie, Allan. "Should Fiction Be Encouraged in Special Libraries?" *Special Libraries* 36 (June 1945): 147–150.
- Lewis, Grace S. "Library of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, Canada." *Special Libraries* 36 (Oct. 1945): 358–360.
- Pratt, Phebe G. "School of Social Work Library." *Special Libraries* 37 (April 1946): 115–117.
- Pearce, Catherine Anne. "The Development of Special Libraries in Montreal and Toronto." MS in LS thesis, University of Illinois, 1947. She was president of the Montreal Chapter from 1941–43 and worked in the United States after the war.

Monday, March 03, 2025

Canadian Mid-century School Libraries and Modern Education, 1945—1950

School Libraries in Canada before 1945



Although Canadian school libraries exhibited signs of progress during the 1930s, this work came to a halt for the most part at the outset of the Second World War. In the

thirties, while British Columbia and Ontario schools continued the tradition of small classroom collections, promotion of good recreational reading, and reliance to a great extent on public libraries for book stocks and branches in schools, there were indications of change. In Ontario, Margaret Fraser, an influential high school librarian at Galt (now Cambridge), outlined what she felt the mission of the school library should be in 1938: “The school library should be the centre of all school activities, working with the teachers and students of all grades and departments. Its work is varied and continuous, but the librarian has three main aims: (1) to encourage reading, (2) to assist the teacher, (3) to teach the student to help himself.” In British Columbia, a *Manual for Small School Libraries* was issued in 1940 that recommended the American Library Association standards of a trained school librarian and separate classroom for elementary schools with more than 100 pupils and a school librarian or full-time librarian for schools with more than 500 students. Later, in 1945, a new set of American standards, *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*, called on school authorities to assume full responsibility for school libraries and differentiated the roles and duties of the school librarian and the public librarian. A trend toward the school library as a reading

and an information center as well as a place for student guidance in its own right was taking hold. Instruction in library skills, classroom and curriculum support, and recreational reading highlighted the role of the library as an important service point in schools.

Interest in school libraries by two western librarians, Louise Riley and Jack Brown, did continue during the wartime years. Their theses were the subject of my earlier blog on [at this link](#). They explored school-public library cooperation and the need for greater provincial support from departments of education. Riley's thesis in particular was an important study of school services in larger cities with more than 10,000 population in several provinces. She reported the typical state of affairs: "In Canada, classroom collections are provided by the public library or the school board or both to some elementary and junior high schools in thirty-one of the fifty cities included in this report." As for centralized libraries: "There are some centralized school libraries in elementary and junior high schools in fifteen public school and three separate school systems." She concluded, "The school library movement is in its infancy in Canada." There was encouraging research on school library development in conjunction with public libraries during the war by two western librarians, Louise Riley and Jack Brown. However, wartime was not an opportune time to implement changes.

Towards the end of WW II, the Canadian Library Council issued *Canada Needs Libraries*; it included provincial statements on the needs for improved school services. Although the main focus was on public library development, school libraries, especially at the secondary level, received more attention in the Ontario and Saskatchewan briefs. With the formation of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in 1946, a truly national voice came into being for library work with children, adolescents, and students. Within a year, a section of CLA was established that included librarians interested in work for children and youth. In November 1947, the Association's journal published several articles on school library work, with a leading article that pointed to new directions and a new philosophy of service related to

educational trends in North America. The principal author was a former teacher, Lillian Lyle Evans (BA 1940, Saskatchewan, and BLS 1942, Toronto), newly appointed as supervisor of school libraries for Saskatchewan in 1946. After working briefly at Toronto Public Library in the Kipling Room, the section for adolescents, and a Florida school library during the war, she became a dynamic force in Canadian school librarianship and eventually Canadian School Libraries Association president in 1969–70. She set forth a new compelling role for school libraries that was being cultivated in the United States in the CLA *Bulletin* published in November 1947.

To-day the school library is conceived as a functional unit of the school, that is as a workshop or laboratory where individuals and classes carry on desirable activities and have valuable experiences. The school library now makes possible investigation and research, curriculum enrichment, independent study and recreational reading. This new and broader concept is a direct outgrowth of recent social and educational changes.

Canadian School Library Progress after 1945

Lyle Evans was referring to the progressive child-centred concept of schooling championed by John Dewey which flourished from the 1920s to 1950s. The traditional, conservative approach in education for a long time was teacher-centred. There was an emphasis on oral instruction, reading and reciting facts from a few graded texts, taking notes, memorizing information by repetition, and studying individually or in classroom groups. Small book collections usually satisfied this concept.

Progressivism meant fitting instruction to the different needs of each pupil; it meant curriculum revision and the eclipse of rote textbook learning; it meant new teaching methods focusing on real-world situations for pupil and group activities; and it meant a new emphasis on understanding social and civil affairs. For school library collections it meant supplying demands for wide reading and provision of varied reference sources. For library staffing it meant training in teaching and librarianship in order to guide or instruct pupils in selecting appropriate material to read

and helping students clarify their thinking and reaching valid conclusions. In Lyle Evans' estimation, "the school library is an integral part of the educative process, and its objectives are actually identical with those of any modern educational program." At mid-century, progressive education was considered to be 'modern' and infused ideas and methods in the United States and Canada despite critics who preferred standardized testing and high standards, such as Hilda Neatby, who published *So Little For the Mind* in 1953.

The November 1947 pages of the **CLA Bulletin** featured prominent contemporary figures in school librarianship. Margaret E. Reid, an Ontario College of Education and Queen's University graduate, wrote on student library usage in St. Catharines. She outlined the usual types of student use: classes with a period of library science (normally grades nine and ten), classes brought to the library by teachers, and individual pupils from all grades. She believed student use of libraries could lay the foundation for a varied adulthood. The chief librarian at Trois Rivières, Claire Godbout, described how the newly established public library provided a school service for young students at six school deposits tended to on a weekly basis by visiting staff. Joseph A. Brunet, the director of school libraries for the Montreal Commission of Catholic Schools, was optimistic about progress in Quebec, especially in Montreal where books were selected, classified, and cataloged at the head office by a professional staff. Rural schools in Quebec were supplied with grants and small deposits of books for classrooms. He believed the idea of the school library was taking shape and gaining ground each year. Mary Silverthorn, a University of Toronto Library School professor, provided an extensive list of book selection aids. She noted there was reliance on American sources and that "school library work in Canada is hampered by the lack of catalogues and book lists designed for Canadian use." Dorothy Cullen, the director of the Prince Edward Island Libraries regional system, reported on the various ways its branches and headquarters supplied library service to all the island schools with deposits and books-by-mail. There was also a

collection of professional literature for teachers at the regional headquarters in Charlottetown.

Summaries of provincial school library developments were also provided. In British Columbia, the Department of Education offered library training in summer school courses for teachers. These teacher-librarians held library positions in graded elementary schools and some junior high schools; however, in high schools only teachers who were also fully qualified librarians were appointed to full-time library positions. The Manitoba Department of Education administered book grants and selection guides: "For the year 1946 books were selected for 1,557 one-room schools and 103 two-room schools, and orders checked for 224 graded schools, thus providing libraries for 2,790 teachers. For these schools 3,798 magazine subscriptions were placed." A professional library for Winnipeg teachers was located in the reading room of the departmental library, but it was noted that professional training had not kept pace with book distributions. Lyle Evans reviewed her new duties in Saskatchewan and pointed to the successful initiative in a Cupar school district northeast of Regina to establish a core collection of texts, supplementary texts, and reference books for each rural school. A central pooled collection was started in the school unit main office staffed by a teacher acting as teacher-librarian. She felt, "The experiment has been so successful and attracted so much interest that many other units and [school] superintendents have been asking for guidance in organizing school library services in their areas." Her work justified her enthusiasm about modernization that

The school library, then, provides material to enrich the school curriculum, develops in pupils good attitudes and habits of study, and promotes a lifelong interest in reading for information, recreation and mental stimulation. That is, the school library is an integral part of the educative process, and its objectives are actually identical with those of any modern educational program.

Despite this inspirational rhetoric, school libraries faced a difficult task implementing better conditions. When the Canadian Education Association surveyed school libraries on a province-by-province basis in 1951, it remarked on the general under developed state of affairs:

It will be noted that proportionately few elementary schools have separate libraries; classroom collections for lending and reference are more common. Libraries are found somewhat more frequently in secondary schools, but there too the classroom collection persists. The library collection as a separate and well equipped unit administered by a qualified person as an essential school service, just as gymnasium or cafeteria, has not been developed on an all-inclusive scale.

Canadian school librarians were not early advocates in supporting progressive ‘modern’ education philosophy. But after 1945, the provision of resources for critical thinking, experimental learning, developing social skills and other worthy features of progressive education came to the fore. Mary Mustard, a prominent school librarian from Brantford, Ontario, declared that a main goal of school library service was “to develop character through desirable book habits” thereby escaping the dull textbook routines of the past. At the CLA School Library Institute held in Winnipeg in June 1949, participants were excited to hear Amelia Munson, an experienced American youth services exponent from New York Library, speak to the issue of ‘Growth Through Reading,’ which offered students opportunities to experience develop personally through the medium of books. In the following year, 1950, a Young People’s Section of CLA was formed, distinct from Children’s Librarians. The new section included public and school library work for teens, and in August 1953 it organized a successful thematic session in Ottawa during CLA’s annual meeting—‘Effective School Library Service.’ Participants learned the effectiveness of any school library was determined by four factors: library accommodation, an adequate collection, a trained librarian, and an appropriate program of activities. Subsequently, in June 1958, the section sponsored a Workshop

on Education of School Librarians at Quebec City where Lyle Evans reported on the current state of affairs for teacher-librarian training: “Six provinces regularly offer courses, two offer courses occasionally, and two do not offer any courses.” The workshop registrants concluded national standards were needed to improve training for school library staffing, a task that would take several more years to complete.

From the outset of the decade and throughout the 1950s, the varied administrative arrangements and finances for schools determined by Canadian departments of education and school boards absorbed the attention of librarians, teachers, and administrators. There were thousands of school boards across the country and the progressive nature of reforms varied a great deal. Traditional pedagogic methods and the 3 R’s were still important. Library proponents were grappling with the organization, staffing, facilities, and collections of school libraries in large bureaucratic provincial structures that were steadily reducing the number of school districts. Although improvements in services would continue to be gradual during the postwar period, nonetheless, after 1950 a national consensus was developing to support better libraries in schools, for formal education programs, and services based on child-centred learning. Many of these issues would be the result in a successful two-day national conference on school librarianship held in Edmonton in 1959 [discussed in my previous blog](#). After 1960, advances in school librarianship would accelerate even as the influence of progressive education itself would begin to face challenges from conservative educators, competing educational issues such as the whole language philosophy of reading, new media, and rapid technological change.

References

My blog on the School Library Institute held in Winnipeg in June 1949 is [at this link](#).

British Columbia Public Library Commission. *Manual for Small School Libraries*. Victoria: The Commission, 1940.

Margaret Fraser, “High School Libraries in Ontario.” *The School [Secondary Ed.]; A Magazine Devoted to Elementary and Secondary Education* 27 (Oct. 1938): 148–151.

My blog on *Canada Needs Libraries* is [at this link](#).

Lyle Evans, “The School Library in Modern Education.” *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 3 (Nov. 1947): 29–30.

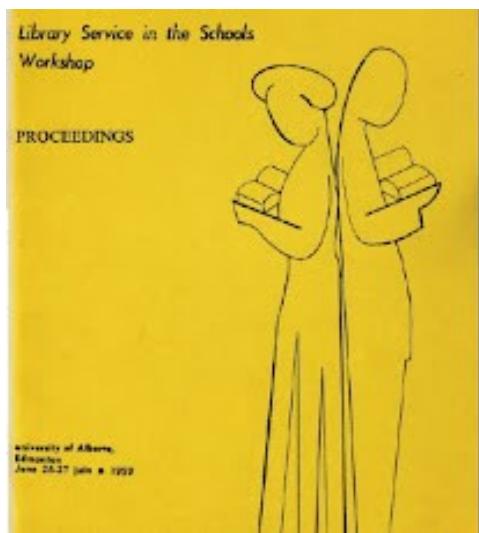
Mary Mustard, “Freedom from Textbooks.” *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 6 (Sept. 1949): 35, 87.

Friday, February 14, 2025

Canadian School Libraries and Librarianship National Meeting in Edmonton, 1959

*Proceedings of the Library Service in the Schools Workshop,
University of Alberta, Edmonton, June 26–27, 1959.* Ottawa:
Canadian Library Association/Association Canadienne des
Bibliothèques, September 1959. 59 p.

Canadian School Libraries before 1950



Although there were hundreds of Canadian school libraries by the mid-19th century, the vast majority were primarily small, informal classroom collections managed by busy one-room teachers in rural areas. As they developed in the first decades of the 20th century, larger elementary school libraries remained underfunded and

continued to rely on access to small classroom collections. Students often used children's services supplied by public libraries (notably Toronto Public Library) or bookmobile services from regional or county libraries, a system patterned on British practice which offered the advantage of recreational reading. Separate centralized libraries in schools, distinct from public libraries, began to appear first in the secondary school sector, a model influenced by American experience that emphasized direct connections with school authorities and

formal educational programs. In the 1930s, the efforts of energetic librarians, such as Joseph A. Brunet, the director of school libraries for the Montreal Catholic School Commission, Arthur Slyfield (Oshawa), Margaret Fraser (Galt, now Cambridge), Mary Mustard (Brantford), and Isabel McTavish (Vancouver), began to spur development by advocating better facilities and collections, encouraging student use of libraries, initiating regional surveys, and publishing handbooks for students,

In the immediate postwar period following 1945, there was more government emphasis on improving services with the appointment of supervisors in departments of education: prominent librarians such as Lillian Evelyn (Lyle) Evans in Saskatchewan in 1946 and Hélène Grenier in the Montreal Catholic School Commission in 1952. During this period, the Young People's Section of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) addressed many problems related to school libraries after its formation in 1950; nonetheless, progress seemed to unfold at a snail's pace. When the Canadian Education Association surveyed the nation's school libraries in 1951, it revealed their underdeveloped state; for example, in Nova Scotia, "most of the schools in the province have book collections, but more than half of the 554,187 volumes in individual schools are felt by the Department [of Education] to be of little value." Several years later, in 1958, when the Dominion Bureau of Statistics published a major survey of elementary and secondary schools in communities of 10,000 and over, it received responses from 200 school boards in 123 centres representing 2,951 schools. The survey revealed that only 1,058 schools (about a third), with a total pupil enrollment of 668,680, operated centralized libraries. Total stock amounted to 2,898,780 volumes or 4.5 volumes per pupil. Fully trained staff, with teacher training and library training to a degree level, was concentrated in intermediate or junior high schools and secondary schools, where 129 professionals supervised 270 libraries.

Canadian Library Association Meeting on School Libraries in 1959

To spur activity, CLA initiated action to plan a national workshop on schools to bring together leaders from seven national associations: the Canadian Association of School Inspectors & Superintendents, Canadian Book Publishers Association, Canadian Education Association, Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, Canadian School Trustees Association, and the Canadian Teachers Federation. CLA aimed to prompt discussion on problems of mutual interest and to allow participants to become acquainted personally. It was hoped that specific ideas arising from this first national workshop would encourage the sponsoring organizations to hold future sessions on specific subjects. The two-day workshop was held at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, in June 1959. The 195 registered delegates included school superintendents, principals, school board and public library board trustees, and public and school librarians. Formal presentations and separate discussion groups dealt with different topics. In general, the entire workshop was themed around providing resources, training librarians to provide services, and how services could best be organized.

Nancy Day, the Supervisor of Library Services in the South Carolina State Department of Education and former President of the American Association of School Libraries in 1954–55, addressed a general session on Friday morning with her topic, “The Place of School Library Service in Education.” She emphasized the importance of recognizing the library as part of the curriculum where learning and learning skills occur. Librarians should select materials, provide reading guidance, and encourage the use of the collection. It is imperative to have someone who knew the collection, the curriculum, and how to work with both children and teachers. Several freewheeling discussions on various issues took place in Friday afternoon breakout groups. There was a sharp division of opinion between school superintendents and librarians about how best to develop libraries initially. The former believed there was a more urgent

need to get more books into the schools, their view being expressed as ‘books before librarians.’ The public library’s role in providing student resources also came under scrutiny. Many delegates felt the responsibility for libraries in schools should come under a Department of Education. Public library activities should encourage school libraries but not directly provide the services, even though some school officials tended to expect such assistance. There was a shift in thinking towards supporting the need for education officials to direct and fund libraries distinct from public libraries. Although cooperation was stressed, there was skepticism that public and school libraries could be combined successfully. There was general agreement that a certified teacher with some professional library training would be the ideal staff for a school library; but for larger schools, a professional librarian with a BEd could best work with teachers. Generally, delegates favoured the centralized library, a dedicated space available to all students which could also supply and refresh classroom collections and support provincial curricula.

On Saturday, Dr. Marion Jenkinson of the University of Alberta Faculty of Education gave an excellent summary of four topics that every group wrestled with. First, the approach librarians utilized to student reading was essential: the librarian viewed children individually, not as part of a classroom pattern. Second, improvements in teacher training were necessary. Thirdly, although there was an air of prestige bestowed on reading, often readers were derided as ‘eggheads’ or ‘squares.’ The Alberta professor declared, “We have to turn the TV image into the feeling that the reader is the ‘best sort of guy to be.’” Fourth, the issue of teacher training was paramount:

Teacher training is not adequate. Elementary teachers frequently receive only seven months training. Here librarians can help in advising in the training. Librarianship is a graduate profession; in the elementary schools there is need for a graduate teaching profession. In a graduate programme for teachers, there should be courses in children's literature. (p. 51)

Dr. Jenkinson stated that teachers, interested groups, and parents should work cooperatively with librarians and education officials in their local communities. She concluded by stressing the need to clarify important issues. There should be more concise definitions about school library work: (1) identify the function of the teacher-librarian as opposed to the children's librarian; (2) clarify the purposes of different branches of library services; (3) articulate the basis for the selection of books; and (4) establish priorities in school library service. At the end of the workshop, delegates adopted two resolutions: they requested the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (DBS) to conduct a representative survey of libraries in publicly operated schools, and they asked for the *Wilson Education Index* to include the periodical, *The Reading Teacher*, in its indexing service.

It is difficult to assess the impact of the 1959 national workshop, but there is no doubt that the pace of school library progress quickened in the 1960s when provincial governments reduced the number of school districts and strengthened financial revenues. The DBS began surveying school libraries on an annual basis and by 1964 the Bureau reported that there were 2,595 centralized libraries staffed by 263 full-time professional school librarians. When Leonard Freiser was hired as chief librarian by the Toronto Board of Education in 1960, he began developing a centralized education center to provide resources for teachers and students in separate libraries in schools independent from Toronto Public Library. In Quebec, Alvine Bélisle became the provincial director of school libraries within the Department of Public Instruction in 1961. During 1961 the Canadian School Library Association (CSLA) was formed as a separate CLA division. The Association soon began publishing a lively quarterly newsletter, the *Moccasin Telegraph*. It also launched a national award in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica for elementary school libraries in 1967. School librarians also organized a Workshop on School Library Standards at the annual CLA conference held in Toronto in June 1965. Two years later, in 1967, *Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools* was published. After this time, the expansion of facilities, collections, and personnel laid the foundation for

school library programs to the end of the century. However, success was not universal. By the early 1970s, it was evident that many school libraries were not able to meet the 1967 standards and that promotion of new guidelines would be necessary.

The meeting in Edmonton also allowed school librarians to network and develop professionally. Laurence Wiedrick, a teacher-librarian at Eastglen Composite High School in Edmonton, began teaching library studies at the University of Alberta in 1964. Another attendee, John Wright, librarian at the Aden Bowman Collegiate in Saskatoon, was appointed Supervisor of School Libraries for the Saskatchewan Department of Education in 1963 and later became president of CSLA in 1967. His colleague, Lyle Evans, followed him as CSLA president in 1969. Many other teachers, librarians, and administrators returned home to continue improving reading, teaching, and learning in elementary and secondary schools. A national consciousness and community of interest had been created on an inter-provincial scale. The delineation of fundamental issues was an essential ingredient in fostering progress in the subsequent decade. The recognition of the need for better-quality, modernized school libraries more closely linked to curriculum was an important (and lasting) outcome of the workshop.

My blog on school library development shortly after WW II is [at this link](#).

My blog on the 1968 Jasper Park Workshop for school library education is [at this link](#).

Friday, February 07, 2025

Edwin Williams and Robert Downs Report on Canadian Academic Libraries, 1962— 1967

Resources of Canadian University Libraries for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Report of a Survey for the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges, by Edwin E. Williams. Ottawa: National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges, November 1962. 87 p.

Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries/Ressources des Bibliothèques d'Université et de Recherche au Canada by Robert B. Downs. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1967. 301 p.

By the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the number of full-time undergraduate and graduate university students across Canada was increasing dramatically, and provincial governments were granting new charters to several universities, such as Victoria, Calgary, Waterloo, York, Guelph, Brock, and Carleton. Additional funding for faculty, teaching staff, and buildings came from federal and provincial governments to accommodate this growth. Consequently, the expansion of libraries, especially collections, formed part of ambitious educational plans, a library phase which might appropriately be termed ‘mid-century modernization.’

Edwin E. Williams Reports on Canadian Academic Libraries, 1962

During this period, library concerns were noted by the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges (NCCUC), which represented university presidents. The genesis of national planning for university libraries grew out of a recommendation by a library committee appointed by the NCCUC to survey

academic libraries to evaluate their research capabilities, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Fourteen of Canada's largest academic libraries, which collectively held almost six million volumes, were selected for the survey. As with many Canadian studies, financing for the study came from the United States. Funds from the Council on Library Resources were secured, and Edwin E. Williams, the Counsellor to the Director of Collections of Harvard University Library, was chosen to conduct the survey.



Edwin Williams held many senior positions at the Harvard University library from 1940 until his retirement in 1980. More importantly, he was quite familiar with the Farmington Plan, a national project organized by American libraries to develop a cooperative acquisitions program for foreign materials. His study was conducted through conversations with 211 faculty members, the distribution of a questionnaire to professors

on the strength of collections, the compilation of a checklist of 10 periodicals in each of 24 fields in the humanities and social sciences, and personal visits to each university. Williams published his findings late in 1962.

The findings of Williams' six-week survey were not surprising to informed observers.

Any recapitulation of strong points in Canadian research collections soon makes it evident that, except in Canadian subjects and in mediaeval studies, there are no collections in

major fields that are outstanding as a whole — assuming that an outstanding collection is one strong enough to attract scholars from other countries. The collections that have reached this level are devoted to individuals or to comparatively narrow fields — Soviet church-state relations and D. H. Lawrence at Alberta; South China gazetteers and Robert Burns at British Columbia; Kipling at Dalhousie; the psychomechanics of language at Laval; Urdu, Thomas Browne, Noel Buxton, Viscount Hardinge, and Hume at McGill; Icelandic at Manitoba; Bonar Law at New Brunswick; and certain fields of Italian and Spanish drama, plus Coleridge, Dickens, Petronius, Tennyson, and Yeats at Toronto.

(p 48)

Williams discovered universities were enthusiastic about the potential of inter-library loan even for undergraduates, a practice he cautioned against because it was not a substitute for strong campus collections. To further serious research, he recommended that the National Library's Union Catalogue project move ahead more rapidly along with the publication of a union list of serials in the humanities and social sciences. This latter task began in 1963 and was completed in 1968 with publication of *Periodicals in the Social Sciences and Humanities Currently Received by Canadian Libraries*. He discussed the advantages of strengthening research collections through an undertaking similar to the Farmington Plan, but felt libraries were not adequate to embark on this expenditure on their own. Instead, he suggested it would be more desirable to use "special funds" for specialization that could make inter-lending more effective for postgraduate programs. An extension of existing Canada Council grants would benefit the entire country and allow universities to build their resources using local revenue. To spur cooperation in the development of research collections, the surveyor advised the creation of an Office of Canadian Library Resources in the National Library. The work of this office would allow universities to build substantial collections locally and ultimately serve national research activity. Another benefit would be the ability to compete more effectively in second-hand book markets for significant publications.

Williams declared that it would be expensive to strengthen university library collections, nevertheless, it was a necessary step to further national and regional educational goals. He concluded:

Yet, while foundations are being laid across the country, the National Library ought to move ahead rapidly, and the existing strong collections at Toronto and other Canadian universities should be improved; failure to develop the National Library and to make great collections out of good ones would demonstrate that Canada aspires to be no more than a dependency of other countries in graduate study and research in the humanities and social sciences. (p. 60)

Resources of Canadian University Libraries was enthusiastically received and served as a catalyst for transformative change. When the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) became a constituent part of the Canadian Library Association in June 1963, it assumed a leadership role in representing library concerns. CACUL immediately realized the importance of Williams' findings and began to liaise with the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges (NCCUC), representing university presidents dealing with the Williams' recommendations. The new library group advocated for the establishment of an Office of Library Resources, a proposal the NCCUC agreed to support later in the year. Eventually, in 1968, this office came into existence and became part of the collection development branch in the 1970s.

Later, in the fall 1963, when the NCCUC annual conference was held, CACUL successfully secured support for a more extensive national survey of academic libraries to expand and amplify the briefer work of Edwin Williams, which had been limited to library resources for graduate study in the humanities and social sciences. Subsequently, the NCCUC (reconstituted as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, AUCC) commissioned Professor Vincent Bladen to conduct a study of financing higher education in 1964 to which CACUL made a presentation on the need for greatly increased library funding,

especially from the federal government. Also, the CACUL submission advised that 10% of a university operating budget be regarded as a minimum standard for collection purposes. The Bladen Commission adopted the federal proposal for funding in its final report, *Financing Higher Education in Canada*, in 1965. A year later, in 1966, the Canada Council announced annual funding for university libraries for acquiring research collections which totalled more than \$3,000,000 before it concluded in 1969.

Robert B. Downs Reports on Canadian Academic Libraries, 1967



The AUCC also agreed to launch a more extensive national survey with grants from the Canada Council and the Council on Library Resources in Washington, D.C. Robert B. Downs, the Dean of Library Administration at the University of Illinois, was invited to lead a survey which included three Canadians. Downs had pursued an illustrious academic career and served as President of the American Library Association in 1953–53. His mandate was quite broad: he was charged

with assessing library administrative and technical organization, staffing, buildings, collections, and financing to maintain expected growth in the following decade. The Downs report was published in 1967 entitled *Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries*.

Robert Downs submitted his report with a wealth of information on the current conditions of university libraries. There were 35 tables of data on 43 institutions that revealed marked progress

had been made just a few years after the Williams report had landed on many desks; for example, 17 libraries reported adding an annual average of more than 20,000 volumes between 1961–66, a noticeable improvement with immediate postwar conditions, 1945–60. Indeed, 1963–64 marked the first time university libraries collectively began to add more than a million volumes per year to their holdings. *Resources* studied eleven major areas including administration, technical services, buildings, reader services (reference, instruction, and circulation), mechanization and automation, finances to sustain growth, cooperative activities, collections, special research holdings, and faculty and student views of the library. Downs' investigation was accomplished by conducting interviews, questionnaires, checklists, and personal observation. Downs took a broad brush approach to the idea of resources in his survey: he included general and special collections, finances, technical services, librarians and staff, library facilities, programs related to instruction, and a number of other services. A total of 41 recommendations were made, many of which became standard guidelines for professional decision-making for a generation of administrators and librarians. The array of information Downs produced included input from faculty and influenced university administrators because they also believed in the value of higher education and the need for accessibility to satisfactory library resources and services.

Many of Downs' recommendations seem rudimentary by today's standards; for example, "for economy, efficiency, and effective service, library administration should be centralized" (p. 2), but the prevalence of 1960s campus departmental libraries and diffused authority warranted this type of review. In the area of automation, which libraries were only beginning to experiment with, Downs could only hint at future directions: "Developments in data processing have made feasible the concept of national and international library networks, offering new approaches to problems of gathering and retrieving certain types of information" (p. 5). The provision of photocopying services, established building standards, the recognition of professional librarians as key members of the academic community, the

separation of clerical and professional duties in staffing, the exercise of leadership on the part of the National Library and the National Science Library in fostering cooperation, special grants from the Canada Council, and sharing of library resources on a local, regional, and national basis were all flagged as necessary to encourage growth. Downs reiterated William's proposal that 10% of an institutional budget should be earmarked for library collections. Especially concerning collections, the report was explicit: "In no case should a college or university provide less than \$150 per year for library maintenance for each full-time student. (p. 7). Further, Downs proposed that

Sustained financial support over a period of years is essential to the growth of strong libraries in Canadian universities; additional appropriations totaling \$150,000,000 for collection development will be required over the next decade, beyond present budget allotments and the current rate of annual increases, for retrospective collecting, if these libraries are to reach a stage of development comparable to the leading American university libraries. (p. 6)

One interesting section of *Resources* that sparks interest now reveals student attitudes to 1960s libraries. Students did not prefer study halls and often brought their own books for study purposes. They indicated more reserve books were needed, assistance from staff was inadequate, and material was in another library elsewhere on campus. For their part, faculty suggested stronger research collections, staff specialists for collection development and reference, speedier processing and access to acquired materials, duplicate copies of books in frequent demand, improved inter-library loans, more efficient circulation systems, and, in a direct conflict with Down's recommendation, more departmental libraries, especially in the sciences.

The Down's report was well received. It became the subject of a conference—"Libraries for Tomorrow"—held in Montreal in April 1968 that the AUCC and CACUL convened to discuss the future of Canadian academic libraries. About seventy librarians attended, and papers were presented on future financing by

Robert Blackburn (Toronto) and general trends in higher education by Basil Stuart-Stubbs (British Columbia). Although this meeting, subsequent discussions, and library reports on standardization and financing by the AUCC did not constitute a comprehensive review and working plan for the implementation of the Downs Report, many of its recommendations were taken to heart across Canada's burgeoning university sector. In 1967, Downs concluded that "despite their rapid progress, the Canadian university libraries, on the whole, will require years of concentrated effort to bring their collections up to a high point of excellence." (p. 224), and by 1971, there were six libraries with more than a million volumes: Toronto, McGill, British Columbia, Western, Montreal, and Laval.

For CACUL members, the report highlighted an area of significance that Downs was known for: his support for academic recognition of librarians. "In the case of college and university libraries, the institutions that will be most successful in attracting and holding able staff members are those where librarians are recognized as an integral part of the academic ranks, a vital group in the educational process, with high qualifications for appointment, and all the rights and privileges of other academic employees (p. 110)." When Downs compiled his survey, academic librarians were subject to various terms of service and methods of appointment. He suggested enlisting the support of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to improve and standardize the status of university professional librarians, an approach adopted by CACUL that was to prove beneficial in gaining status for librarians and creating a common community of interest with faculty during the 1970s.

However, future economic conditions in the 1970s, namely, rising costs and slower growth, often referred to as 'stagflation,' would curb the rapid development of university libraries. Along with increasing rates of inflation, administrators faced new challenges, such as providing resources to support Canadian studies, automated bibliographic control, computerized searching, and sharing information through networking on a national scale. Libraries had to contend with the 'information

explosion' as books and journals flooded the scholarly marketplace. New university programs were launched that often lacked adequate library resources. New faculty appointments were made, although it was difficult to support their specializations. The advent of cross-disciplinary programs required new library resource fields and services. The 1970s would be just as challenging as the 1960s, because expectations exceeded eroded revenues. Observers of retrenchment in the decade following the Downs report often refer to a 'golden age' of university growth in the 1960s that had passed.

The reports by Edwin Williams and Robert Down were valuable reviews of current conditions and helpful guides to future action. As well, the reports heightened awareness and visibility concerning library needs in Canadian higher education. The two authors provided an astonishing wealth of information about collections, contemporary conditions, and potential costs of funding improved services. But there was no master national plan envisaged. Together, the two reports highlighted the needs of libraries in the post-secondary sector and outlined the stunning financial implications. Administrators across the country were left to deal with the level of implementation and coordination with provincial educational authorities. While CACUL and CAUT assumed leadership for professional librarian concerns, the AUCC and senior university officials, together with library directors, were ultimately responsible for encouraging and implementing local progress. For the most part, the efforts of these groups and individuals were successful for several years until the economic recession of 1973–75 introduced organizational retrenchment and fiscal restraint.

The [Williams Report](#) is available on the Internet Archive.

The [Downs Report](#) is available on the Internet Archive.

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

A New History of the English Public Library: Intellectual and Social Contexts, 1850–1914 by Alistair Black (1996)

A New History of the English Public Library: Intellectual and Social Contexts, 1850–1914 by Alistair Black. London: Leicester University Press, 1996. 353 p.

This blog is a condensed version of my review that appeared originally as “In review: the new history for public libraries,” *Epilogue; Canadian Bulletin for the History of Books, Libraries, and Archives* 11, 2 (1996): 27–35 published by Dalhousie University.

Alistair Black recently published an important book on public library history in England. His timing is apt because it appears when speculation and pessimism about the prospect for library history exists. To distinguish his new history, Black has used a theoretical perspective and model for public library development in the Victorian-Edwardian period and presented his ideas using a non-narrative historical mode. As well, this New History explores the dimensions of the two library histories: history-as-event (the actual past) and history-as-account (past recorded by historians). His valuable work merits a critical review and it invites a short discussion about the study of library history from a Canadian context and a general historiographic perspective.

Black’s publication encompasses the period from the mid-Victorian years to the onset of the Great War. His main arguments are as follows. Beginning in the last part of the nineteenth century the public library as a social institution inspired and promoted an agenda of societal progress and individual self-realization that incorporated intellectual, aesthetic ideas, and material, practical concerns. Black contends that

libraries were considered to be a stabilizing force because they were part of an overall civilizing process and because they incorporated existing elements of social control along class lines between 1850–1914. To organize his arguments, the author introduces a model composed of idealist and utilitarian “flywheels.” At the societal-structural level, each of these revolving, conceptual movements were a source of aesthetic and practical arguments to encourage access to resources in municipal rate-supported public libraries.

The cultural uplift and stabilizing missions that libraries undertook are historical reconstructions that are relatively familiar and less controversial territory for library historians today than more than two decades ago when Michael H. Harris published a thought-provoking revisionist article on social control concerning the origin of the Boston Public Library in the 15th September 1973 issue of *Library Journal*. What is new is Black’s over-arching interpretation of library growth and the non-narrative basis of his work. He provides convincing deductive, theoretical statements about the general nature of culture and the relevance of social stability. In addition, he deliberately eschews the methodology that library historians have traditionally employed: various chapters of the New History focus on questions or issues rather than chronology, description, and narration of events. It is intellectual history at work, the viewpoint that ideas are major factors in shaping historical events.

I would encourage readers to explore the *New History*, for many stimulating ideas can be found. However, for the purpose of this review, I must be content with a brief summary.

In chapters 1–2, Black’s definitions of culture and social stability are discussed. As well, the public library goal of free service and tax-based funding is viewed from the different outlooks of the English social classes. In this context, the public library’s role in easing social tensions becomes a central part of its early development during a period of class conflict and the extension of political rights to the working class. The first part of Black’s

book provides essential structural and theoretical information for the reader.

Next, the utilitarian promotion of public libraries by philosophic thinkers, such as John Stuart Mill, William Ewart, Edward Edwards, and the 1849 Select Committee parliamentary inquiry, is investigated in chapters 3–5. Material issues—the library’s contribution to the value of useful knowledge, the achievement of economic well-being by individuals through lifelong learning, and the demonstration of political economic benefits (e.g., the growth of a skilled workforce for labour markets)—are covered in chapter 6. Obviously, the utilitarian flywheel helped generate library development during the birth of the public library movement at mid-century.

In chapter 7, the idealist flywheel, particularly reform liberalism that encouraged state intervention, a more informed citizenship, and equality, is introduced. The influential idealist philosophy of Thomas Hill Green is especially relevant here. In the following chapter, Black argues that many idealist elements became the principal concerns of an assertive middle class which endorsed the concept of cultural advancement associated with free libraries. This process included support for ideas related to social control and emulation of many worthy Victorian virtues, such as success, that harmonized social relations in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Black proceeds in chapters 9–10 to analyze and describe an emerging profession of librarians and public library design. As librarians gradually adopted an expanded public service ethic, they also advanced scientific claims for their own profession. These developments are discussed in terms of power and status and their properties in society. As well, the design of social space in libraries exhibited changing architectural styles and plans; for example, open access to collections recognized democratic reforms and monumental, decorative exteriors reflected the public’s preference for expressing civic prominence and dignity. By 1914, Black deems that the major phases of development in the New History had evolved fully.

In his concluding chapter, Black discusses his main arguments about the public library's important stabilizing societal role before 1914 in dispensing humanistic and scientific education that satisfied the aesthetic and material concerns of all classes. Here, and throughout *New History*, I find his arguments informative, balanced, and convincing in terms of an historical account for England. The reader is not at a loss for definitions and relationships between variables. Within each chapter, Black identifies social terms (e.g., hegemony, status) and conducts an extensive examination of the connections that library promoters had with the two main conceptual flywheels. As he notes at an early stage, this can be a "heavyweight treatment" (p. 4), and, in the case of how much idealist philosophy the public library promoters read, he acknowledges that the evidence is slight in chapter 7 (p. 157). Akin to other British and American library history colleagues who have recently developed new research fronts, Black has launched a fresh approach and navigated his subject with vigour and candour.

Other library historians also believe the use of theory and hypotheses may serve us well. Clearly, Black favours using rigorous historical methodology common to the social sciences. He feels, for many reasons, that traditional event-based historical works lack a focus or do not effectively serve contemporary librarianship. Conceptual frameworks, structural inquiries, and non-chronological presentations can be difficult to read, but they have merits that appear in *New History*. First, there is a more explicit approach to historical assumptions about chronological periods and the social structure within which library development occurred. This approach allows a theory of library development to be elaborated without the interruption of any [hi]story. Second, ideas about library growth and progress are set out as theses to be tested from the available evidence rather than sequences of events to be followed step-by-step. Third, terminology from the social sciences, e.g., social hegemony (how the domination of a group or groups is achieved by political and ideological means) or culture (the beliefs, customs, and way of life of groups), are presented in a more precise way.

Finally, the use of models, the energizing, methodically revolving flywheels in this case, is introduced for specific purposes to represent the real world.

The use of theory and models in the *New History* requires some examination. It is not theory on a grand scale: its role is more humble. We are not dealing with the Frontier, Staple, Laurentian, or Metropolitan-Hinterland Theses that Canadian history students study from a national perspective to explain Canada's development. Black's use of theory provides a conceptual framework for historical inquiry, a means to describe and to understand library development by testing evidence for the utilitarian-idealist model. This application allows for a certain coherent, structured analysis throughout. After the evidence has been interpreted, analyzed, and presented, the reader should give some thought to the overall hypothesis of the "why" of development. Of course, the place of theory in history is a matter of continuing debate. Some historians, especially in Britain, would reject the use of theories in their inquiries because they believe that people and events have a uniqueness and singular importance each of their own.

Black's modelling effort for the 1850–1914 period also presents an opportunity to be creative. Historical models can be helpful frameworks that set out the major components involved and indicate their importance. In this way, unconscious assumptions cannot impose upon the "facts" (judgements on the past which historians usually agree upon), the historian of libraries must focus upon how components relate to one another in the historical process. The reader profits from a more systematic presentation of issues. Of course, any model is not an actual replica of a process: one important criticism of structuralism is that it discounts the struggles that individuals and groups engage in to achieve their goals. Models should act as a link between theory, hypotheses, and observations and the historical field of study. They should not displace people and events in historical reconstructions.

At a more general historical level we could ask: what are

historians attempting to do, and what is history about? After all, Alistair Black refers to the present unrest in library history (pp. 16-19), and, in his concluding chapter, entices his readers (myself at least) to explore the interrelationships between history-as-event and history-as-account by discovering how contemporary late twentieth-century public library viewpoints of service may be invigorated by observing more proactive Victorian and Edwardian precedents. He is especially concerned that today's libraries and librarians make modest societal claims; indeed, they appear to have lost the ability to stake out valuable positions that would attract widespread support and actively promote further library growth. But we must understand that introspection is not limited to the field of library studies. The entire historical profession has been engaged in serious self-analysis for some time. Today there are numerous historical schools of thought, but, in general, there are four main groupings. There are those who continue to narrate the events of history and use a chronological format for their presentations. Typically, this is the "old history," but there have been new converts to narration in the last twenty years. There are social-scientific oriented historians who employ a broad range of analyses and quantitative techniques. There are Marxists. And there are many followers of the French Annales school, a very diverse group which explores all aspects of history, the events of everyday life and the subconscious. In fact, these four groupings have existed for decades and it is difficult to say what is old or new about their approaches or selection of subject matter. The old history is not a monolithic edifice by any means because it is continually refreshed by new ideas and methods.

Increasingly, postmodern concerns intrude on the study of history. Postmodernism presents a challenge to the historical profession at the same time that, in its own way, it provides fresh historical insights. Generally, postmodernists dismiss history: they declare it is empty of meaning for individuals, groups, or nations; or conversely, say that "everyone is his/her own historian" in the search for past meanings. There are many arguments to be presented against the linearity of time, the objectivity of historians, and the conventional, narrative

explanations frequently presented in history books. The “end of history” is a phrase now often raised by contemporaries; it seems to signal the end of identifiable historical directions; the rejection of progress or evolutionary historical explanations; and skepticism about the value of historical narratives, theory, models, and explanation.

Postmodern critics challenge the very basis of historical inquiry. They reject the view that historians should or can be objective; they scoff at the idea that history-as-account can help interpret or transmit our cultural heritage to future generations; they deny that reason can be used to explain history-as-event, the past we all view from different perspectives; and, further, they deny that there is a real, knowable past. History for many postmoderns is a very limited, personal inquiry with mostly contemporary time frames; discontinuous events; and stories drawn from memory, interpreted texts, as well as a great variety of non-traditional documentary sources. It is as important to feel history as it is to understand it. These redefinitions have serious consequences. Without the concept of linear time and the status of scientific objectivity, historians find the creation of causal explanations an impossible task. Theory making at any level, on a meta- or micro-scale, becomes a transient activity with relatively few definite consequences.

What then can we be sure of? Library historians deal with what has taken place. In my view, historical knowledge cannot be an exact set of true statements, completely accurate descriptions, or definitive representations of the past. We must acknowledge limits to our understanding and the potential for different interpretations of events, facts, and evidence. Historical knowledge, like the science of physics or chemistry, must rest on understanding existing evidence. Because we cannot be certain that all relevant evidence is available to us in our present, there can be no closure on historical explanations, cause and effect relationships, structural analysis, or chronicle of past deeds and events. The dimension of time is always with us, and within it, we will constantly change our perspectives between the present and points in the past. The pursuit of new possibilities seems

limitless.

Black's *New History* should be viewed in this light. In the past half-century, a number of classic histories on public library development in the United States and Britain have focused on the "why" of public library growth. However, I believe library historians should not be too preoccupied with explaining why things have happened. Instead, they should also explain the how, what, when, who, and where of library history. These explanations require different questions: "What restrictions should be placed on the contents of a public library?"; "How did the practice of open access to public library collections come about?"; "Who was responsible for promoting public library growth?"; or "When did classification systems become standardized in public libraries?" The events and agents of change are as important as the concept of causation in history, and depending on the question or audience the historian is addressing, different forms of presentation will be employed.

At times, it is very difficult to separate history-as-account from history-as-event. The past shapes much of the present. What is written about the past and the way it is presented can influence contemporary historical events. Exactly how the past affects the present can be a historical and even a philosophical problem. Perhaps it is best to view the past as an open book, with many pages and many possibilities for additional pages. Historians have many procedures and methods which help us explore the past. Alistair Black's *New History* has a lasting value. His book offers us new perspectives and explanations about the development of public libraries, and at the same time he encourages us to attempt to use different historical methods which lead to new discoveries about past and contemporary libraries and librarians.

The old history will always be with us, ready to be infused with the new history. In time, the new history itself will be challenged by even newer historical perspectives and methodologies and face the prospect of change. In many ways, the past is before us

and the history of public libraries is ripe for (re)exploration, (re)interpretation, and, ultimately, revitalization.

Saturday, August 31, 2024

The Canadian Library Association is Formed, June 1946

When the Second World War ended in summer 1945, the long-awaited time for creating a national organization for Canadian librarians, trustees, staff, and anyone interested in libraries had arrived. For almost four years, the Canadian Library Council (CLC), headed first by Charles Sanderson, Toronto Public Library, and then by Margaret Gill, National Research Library, had been planning for the establishment of a national association on a membership basis. There was general agreement that a country-wide association to promote library interests and a national library to provide services that were not currently available to Canadians were both essential. Earlier in the year, in April, the Council had set up specific committees to prepare concrete proposals concerning an organizational meeting and a constitution to be adopted by provincial library associations during summer and autumn 1945. Another measure, a national survey of libraries to ascertain existing conditions and future library needs was also brought forward for action.

Afterwards, Elizabeth Homer Morton, the CLC executive director working from the National Research Library, crisscrossed the country to seven provinces to discuss matters, such as the national association, inter-library cooperation, and the proposed library survey. By the end of 1945, all seven existing provincial associations had approved the main CLC resolution. General sentiment favoured an association based on personal membership open to anyone interested in libraries. Because the American Library Association was due to convene in Buffalo in late June 1946, Canadian organizers decided that their meeting should be in proximity to allow for attendance at both conferences. The CLC formed an activities committee under the direction of Freda F. Waldon, Hamilton Public Library, to determine the scope of the proposed organization. Her colleague, Marget Meikelham at McMaster University,

began arrangements to host the first meeting on her campus. Thus, the stage was set for an initial founding conference in Hamilton from Friday, June 14th, to Sunday, June 16th, 1946.

The theme selected for the organizational conference was *Libraries in the Life of a Nation*. The advance program featured two keynote addresses on national issues: the Liberal cabinet minister, Secretary of State Paul Martin, speaking on National Unity and Citizenship and Dr. Luther Evans, Librarian of Congress, speaking on The National Library in the Life of the Nation. As well, several workshop meetings with consultants; private meetings of individuals with mutual interests; a meeting of the new Executive; an assembly vote to create CLA; and the setting up of national committees were also features. Then, some members would be free to travel to Buffalo to attend ALA.



Convocation Hall in McMaster University Hall

The CLC met in Hamilton on June 12–13 at the Royal Connaught Hotel on King Street to review the activities of 1945/46 and make final preparations for the conference. Then, Margaret Gill opened the conference for delegates on Friday morning in Convocation Hall.

“I hope that you all feel as I do, that this is really a very thrilling occasion. The older librarians will know that this is the culmination of a great many years of effort to give Canada a national library association. There have been various attempts in the past, and they have not succeeded in getting beyond the very first stage of good intentions. Today and tomorrow we are going to see something more effective. Both the weather and the reception we have had at McMaster indicate that we are well on the way to a good start.”

Gerhard Lomer (McGill University) followed with a speech on the background of events leading up to the proposed national organization. Then, a panel discussion on the Canadian library scene was held to inform members about the state of libraries nationwide.

The Friday afternoon session was given over to concerns about the proposed CLA constitution, financial affairs, and proposed CLA activities. Delegates made an important addition to the draft constitution by insisting that its title be bilingual before leaving for a tour of the Hamilton Public Library. Later in the evening, two speakers addressed delegates. C. Cecil Lingard, chief librarian at Regina, spoke about the role of UNESCO and its potential for change. Canada was a founding member of UNESCO, which came into being later in 1946. Paul Martin, the federal MP representing Windsor and Secretary of State for Canada in the Liberal Cabinet, emphasized the political and cultural importance of national institutions. Because Canada exhibited many different ethnic origins and regional disparities, “it is not surprising that in this country, despite our pride in our heritage, we find ourselves less unified than many of us would like.” He fully supported the work of librarians and the need for a national organization. “Your organization can assume an important role in developing a sense of Canadian unity. Through your work in the community you can bring knowledge of other communities. You can help explain to one part of Canada what other parts of Canada are like. You can contribute to the basic understanding that our fellow citizens, wherever they live, are

much the same. They have the same objectives, they want the same guarantees and the same securities.”

Librarians resumed discussion on the constitution on Saturday morning before the announcement of the slate of officers for 1946/47.

President: Freda Waldon, Hamilton

First Vice-President: W. K. Lamb, University of British Columbia

Second Vice-President: Joseph Brunet, Montreal Catholic School Commission

Treasurer: Hugh Gourlay, Edmonton

The current members of the CLC were elected councillors for one year pending the election of 1947.

The Saturday afternoon was given over to eight workshops on particular interests: (1) work with film collections, (2) library building design highlighting the London Public Library opened in 1941, (3) effective organization of library services, especially along regional lines, (4) Canadian reference tools, (5) cataloguing for the nation highlighted by a talk by Rev. Robert J. Scollard, St. Michael's College, Toronto, who stressed the need for a National Library to take the lead in classifying, bibliographic control, and cataloguing for all Canada, (6) the possibility of library services from community centres, and (7) young person's interests. Another session, held by the Canadian Association of Children's Libraries, formed in 1939, decided to ask the CLA executive to establish their group as a distinct section of the new association. Sheila Egoff made a presentation on radio programming for children, and Jean Thompson, Toronto Public Library, was elected chair of this group for 1946/47.

For the evening session, Dr. Luther Evans described the evolution of the Library of Congress, touching upon one of its main responsibilities: “the complex of problems connected with mastering the devices to make these constantly increasing books and documents, sound recordings and motion pictures, newspapers and manuscripts, accessible to scholars and general

readers.” Regarding the collections, he alluded to the need for work on a national basis, “co-operation that must inevitably be spearheaded by a leading agency such as a national library.”

Loud applause erupted at the end of his speech and Dr. Evans told the audience that if they did not stop clapping, he would give another speech. The evening session concluded with the showing of three library films and discussions about the possibility of using films for public relations programs.

The general conference closed on Saturday night with an address by CLA’s first president, Freda Waldon. She kept her remarks short. “I just want to say that I am very conscious of the honour you have done me and very apprehensive of the responsibility that goes with it. I can only say that I will do my best, and I hope that I shall not let you down after the splendid leadership you have had from Miss Gill.” She finished by saying, “I feel that this conference is a challenge to us and an historic occasion and I do hope that we shall be able to make it go. We have just got to make it go.”

By all accounts, CLA-ACB was off to a successful start. The transition from the Canadian Library Council to the new association was a testament to the leadership, vision, and hard work of a dedicated few, such as Elizabeth Homer Morton, who had moved to Ottawa from Toronto to become secretary. National goals were being developed and a small (300) membership base slowly expanded. The new executive and CLC councillors departed for ALA in Buffalo on Monday morning where they would meet again. Americans were hopeful that a national organization could be formed and traditional ties with Canadian members would be maintained. The CLC would continue in existence until the new association was incorporated. This eventually took place in December 1947 when W.K. Lamb was CLA president.

During its first CLA executive-council session in October 1946, a dinner meeting was held in Toronto with representatives from learned societies and national organizations. Of course, the principal topics were plans for a national library and a joint brief

to the federal government. Shortly afterwards, a brief, *A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada*, was prepared under the sponsorship of the Canadian Library Association, the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Historical Association, the Canadian Political Science Association and the Social Science Research Council of Canada. It emphasized services rather than a new building housing an extensive collection. It is the subject of my [earlier blog published in 2021](#).

Although it was not officially incorporated, the new association had immediately assumed all the activities of the older CLC and its executive office in Ottawa. Its primary pursuit after 1947 was a national library, and for this reason CLA-ACB repeated its ideas again in another brief in 1949, *The National Library of Canada, Its Eventual Character and Scope* that I discussed in [an earlier blog](#). Although it took several years, in 1952 the National Library Act was passed by the Canadian Parliament, becoming law in January 1953.

A biography of Freda Waldon is available on the [Ex Libris Association website](#).

A biography of Margaret Gill is available on the [Ex Libris Association website](#).

[*The Morton Years: The Canadian Library Association, 1946–1971*](#) can be read free at the Internet Archive by creating an account.

Sunday, July 21, 2024

Anne Isabel Hume (1892–1966)



For many years, Anne Hume was a dynamic force in Canadian librarianship. From 1936–57, she was the Chief Librarian of Windsor, Ontario, a city that grew to more than 120,000 population during her tenure. During this time, Ann Hume grew with the city: she was a founding member of the Windsor Art Association and the Education Council, a co-organizer of the Institute of Community Leadership, a

charter member of the Nutrition Council, a charter member and director of Windsor and District Film Council, a charter member and later the President of the University Women's Club, a charter member of the Zonta Club, and President of the Music, Literature and Art Club. She was on the executive of the Windsor Council of Women and on the Community Welfare Council, a member of Assumption University of Windsor Senate, a member of the Adult Education Commission, and served on the board of the YWCA. On a professional basis, she was President of the Ontario Library Association (1940–41) and President of the Canadian Library Association (1954–55). Anne Hume was a charming hostess at home as well as other venues and enjoyed a good game of golf. She retired to Campbellford in 1963, a town she knew as youngster, and died there in 1966.

I originally posted this biographical synopsis of Anne Hume for the Ex Libris Association in 2021. The post also continues on the current ELA website. The portrait is her graduate BA portrait that appeared in the *Queen's Yearbook for the Arts*, 1914.

Anne Isabel Hume

b. 5 April 1892, Seymour Twp. (near Campbellford), ON; d. 3 Jan. 1966, Campbellford, ON.

Education:

1914 BA Queen's University

1915 Specialist Teaching Certificate in English and History
Queen's University

1919 Library certificate Ontario Library School, Toronto

1957 LL.D. Queen's University

Positions:

1915–19 Ontario High school teacher in Beaverton, New Liskeard and Campbellford

1920 Library Assistant, Fort William Public Library (now Thunder Bay)

1920–36 Chief Librarian, Walkerville Public Library

1936–57 Chief Librarian, Windsor Public Library

Occasional lecturer, McGill and Toronto University Library Schools

Publications:

Hume, Anne (1933). "Adult education and reading lists."

Ontario Library Review 17 (3): 102–104.

Hume, Anne (1937). "City of Windsor Public Library system."

Ontario Library Review 21 (3): 133.

Hume, Anne (1938). "Pensions." Ontario Library Review 22 (3): 193–194.

Hume, Anne (1939). "Public libraries and the schools." Ontario Library Review 23 (2): 119–20.

Hume, Anne (1941). "Presidential address [Books in Wartime]." Ontario Library Review 25 (3): 232–234.

Hume, Anne (1944). "An experiment in community integration of the arts." Ontario Library Review 28 (4): 478–480.

Hume, Anne (1947). "The building programme of the public

- library in relation to its functions.” *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 24 (2): 42–45, 60.
- Hume, Anne (1948). “The public library and the community [Pt. 1].” *Quill and Quire* 14: 19–21 & 28.
- Hume, Anne (1948). “The public library and the community [Pt. 2].” *Quill and Quire* 14: 37–40.
- Hume, Anne (1948). “The Public library and the community [Pt. 3].” *Quill and Quire* 14: 16–19.
- Hume, Anne (1949). “The librarian in the community.” *Ontario Library Review* 33 (1): 41–44.
- Hume, Anne (1949). “Know your Library Week [in Windsor].” *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 5 (4): 136–140.
- Hume, Anne (1954). “The Year Ahead, 1954–1955.” In *Proceedings of the Canadian Library Association 9th Annual Conference Meeting*, Halifax, 21–24 June 1954, pp. 30–33. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.
- Hume, Anne (1955). “Seminole Branch Library, Windsor, Ontario.” *Ontario Library Review* 39 (4): 228–232.
- Hume, Anne (1955). “President’s Address.” In *Proceedings of the Canadian Library Association 10th Annual Conference Meeting*, Saskatoon, 20–25 June 1955, pp. 4–10. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

Associations:

- President, Ontario Library Association, 1940–1941
President, Canadian Library Association, 1954–1955
American Library Association, councillor
Canadian Association for Adult Education, councillor
founding member of the Windsor Art Association in 1936

Comments:

“Miss Hume was more than a fine librarian in the technical sense. She was a woman of firm convictions to which she held with perseverance. She was willing to fight for the library cause and had she been lacking in this characteristic she could not have achieved all that she did. Her influence was felt also in many

other community organizations in which she had been so active.”
— Windsor Star, January 4, 1966

Sources:

“Anne Hume: Librarian, Book Service Pioneer Dies,” Windsor Star, January 4, 1966

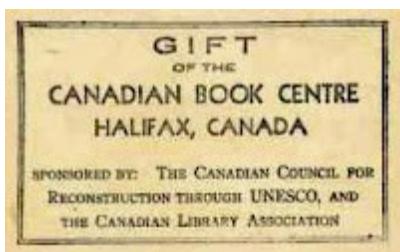
Canadian Who’s Who 1958–1961

[Windsor Public Library video profile of Anne Hume](#) to celebrate International Women’s Day [one-and-a-half minutes]

Sunday, June 23, 2024

The Canadian Book Centre at Halifax, 1948–1950

In the summer of 1945, in the aftermath of war, many European communities lay in ruins. Millions of people had died, a mass displacement of persons and families had occurred, and food shortages were commonplace. Amid this disastrous situation, the daunting task of rebuilding and restocking many demolished libraries was no less serious. For example, an estimated 15,000,000 library items had been destroyed in Poland, especially in Warsaw. However, even before the war ended, there were plans to restore libraries, notably the American Library Association's project to create an American Book Center for War Devastated Libraries to operate from the Library of Congress. From 1945–47, the ALA Center collected, documented, and shipped more than 3,500,000 books overseas to over 40 countries. Another international organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), founded in 1945, undertook to launch a number of reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. Canada was one of the twenty founding members interested in UNESCO library promotion, such as its *Bulletin for Libraries* launched in 1947, its Summer School for Librarians at Manchester and London, which several Canadians attended in 1948, and the *Manifesto for Public Libraries* issued in 1949.



In Canada, the efforts of the American Book Center attracted the attention of the Canadian Council of Reconstruction through UNESCO (CCRU), a voluntary organization formed in autumn 1947 to

carry out a national campaign to supply the educational cultural reconstruction of war-devastated countries in Europe and Asia.

In the following year, June 1948, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the CCRU formed a Joint Book Committee chaired by Margaret Gill, the chief librarian for the National Research Council in Ottawa. She attended the first general conference of UNESCO held in Paris in November 1946 and spoke about her experience at the annual CLA conference held in Vancouver in 1947. With \$50,000 approved for a one-year project by the CCRU, the Joint Committee quickly drafted a plan to establish a Canadian Book Centre to collect, document, and ship books and periodicals overseas to Europe and organize a nationwide campaign to collect books. Each book would bear a stamped gift bookplate indicating the source of the donation.

The first phase, establishing a Book Centre, began in September 1948 at Halifax, where the federal government provided a building close to pier 21 with 8,000 square feet of space that had been used as a hostel during the war. It was on Terminal Road near the dockyards and railway terminus and was quickly refitted with office space, furnishings, lighting, and shelving. The Centre, augmented with additional storage, formally opened in February 1949 under the direction of Maritimer, Margaret N. Reynolds (BA Dalhousie, 1935 and BLS McGill, 1938). She had worked as a special librarian before the war before serving as the chief librarian for the Canadian Legion Services and then overseas in London from 1944–46. Her assistant, a young BLS graduate from McGill (1947), Donald A. Redmond, had served in the Canadian forces after getting his BSc at Mount Allison in 1942. He wrote retrospectively about the hectic activity at the Centre: “Seven Months to Build a Library” in the November 1949 issue of the *Canadian Library Association Bulletin*. At the outset of operations in 1948, letters were sent to libraries across Canada soliciting contributions of scientific, technical, cultural, and educational books that could be used in European schools, public, and university libraries. In this initial request, libraries across Canada contributed almost 50,000 items transported to Halifax by the beginning of 1949. In the first few months of 1949, these materials were accessioned, shelved, and stored to await shipment to Europe arranged through Canadian consulates.

A broader second phase, a national publicity campaign known as the March of Books/*En avant les Livres* with the slogan Give a Book to a Hungry Mind was ready to be rolled out by October 1948. An extensive publicity campaign by newspapers, radio, and correspondence was conducted alongside contacts with organizations in cities and towns through the auspices of regional organizers. The National Film Board helped highlight the campaign by producing a short 16mm film for the CCRU, *Hungry Minds*, which was screened across Canada and documented the intellectual starvation of children and adults in European countries suffering from the aftereffects of war.

Approximately 185,000 books arrived in Halifax for potential distribution overseas. Regional committees were created from the Atlantic to the Pacific in such as large-scale program. These committees organized regional collection depots nationwide where initial screening of materials took place, often supervised by local librarians. For example, McGill University reported two best-sellers, *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor and Warwick Deeping's *Kitty*, along with fiction and school texts that were not suitable for Europe were routed to local hospitals or forwarded to the Salvation Army for underprivileged children or appropriate groups. The regional depots reduced the work of the Halifax staff by culling unusable materials. At the peak of its operations, the Book Centre employed fourteen full-time employees. The staff unpacked shipments, screened the donations and organized materials into about twenty subject classifications. Then, shelved materials were screened again before simplified catalogue cards were typed with subject headings, and the books and periodicals restocked alphabetically by author under the relevant subject. Fifteen book lists in pamphlet form were then compiled, printed, and distributed between June to October 1949 to more than a thousand European libraries in the following countries: France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Poland, Greece, and West Germany. Recipients were asked to check their required items and advise the Centre using forms developed by UNESCO, thus eliminating the shipment of unwanted or duplicate books.



By mid-1950, the work of the Centre was complete. It had received a reported 248,093 items and shipped 163,500 items with stamped gift bookplates—about 100,000 to Europe; 16,000 to India (UNESCO was sponsoring a New Delhi Public Library project in 1950–51); 15,000 to Trinidad that had requested assistance; 9,000 to the National Library in Ottawa; and about 20,000 to Canadian rural libraries and schools. The Centre had officially shelved 185,168 items and discarded 21,688, i.e. 12% of the total processed. The most requested subject field was Medical and Biological Sciences. The distribution of books was arranged overseas and official presentations made by Canadian embassy staff from External Affairs, such as the one in April 1950 for 5,000 books at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris by Major-General Georges P. Vanier (above at right), the Canadian ambassador to France.

Its work completed; the Book Centre closed in June 1950 after twenty-two months of operation. The CCRU continued assisting European schools, universities, and cultural groups, as well as offering fellowships for study until it surrendered its UNESCO charter in 1953. The brief March of Books campaign garnered the most publicity, but there was some residual publicity when the Book Centre was in its final stages. Newspapers and

Maclean's Magazine picked up on Margaret Reynolds' collection of memorabilia from donated books: unusual bookmarks, photographs, locks of hair, Sunday-school certificates, liquor price lists, letters, news clippings, pressed flowers, badges, etc. It added a personal touch to a national drive that many Canadian librarians felt justified the work of the Book Centre. Although a relatively small contribution in sum, it was a worthwhile effort because the recipient libraries definitely requested each donation. At the summer 1950 CLA annual meeting in Montreal, Margaret Gill reported, "We feel that this aim has been achieved and that the real value of the contribution is many times the face value of the money invested in the project."

The two librarians responsible for the Book Centre's success went on to distinguished careers. Margaret Reynolds moved to Ottawa in 1950 to become the chief librarian of the Canadian Agriculture Library and expanded its collections and reputation greatly over two decades before her retirement in 1975. In 1996, she was honoured at a ceremony marking the official opening of the Margaret Reynolds Archival Collection of departmental publications. She died in 1997. Donald Redmond earned his MLS at Illinois in 1950 and became head of the Nova Scotia Technical College, 1949–60. During this period, he undertook development roles in Ankara (Turkey) and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). He was a science librarian at the University of Kansas from 1961–66 and assisted with planning catalogues for the Costa Rica National Library. He returned to Canada to be the chief librarian at Queen's University from 1966–77. An avid interest in Sherlock Holmes led him to write two Sherlockian books. He died in 2014.

The NFB documentary produced in 1948, *Hungry Minds*, is eleven minutes long and can be viewed at the UNESCO archives [at this link](#).

My biography of [Margaret Gill](#) is available on the Ex Libris Association website.

Sunday, June 16, 2024

Controlling Undesirable Magazines in Canada, 1946

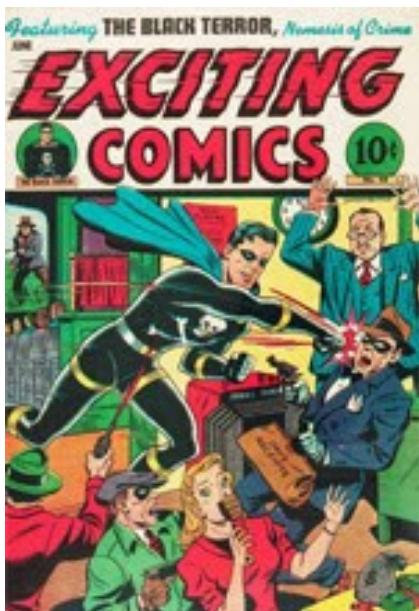
Jessie Robson (Mrs. Austin) Bothwell and the Saskatchewan Library Advisory Council, *The Problem of Controlling the Reading of Undesirable Periodical Literature*. Regina: Saskatchewan Library Advisory Council, 1946. [A Brief presented to Saskatchewan Library Advisory Council on November 25, 1946; reprinted in the *Ontario Library Review* 31, no. 2 (May 1947): 125–136]



Modern entertainment takes the place of the old family circle.

In the immediate years following WW II, the mass production and distribution of cheap publications, such as comics, pocketbooks, magazines, and tabloids, quickly became a new phenomenon facing Canadians. At the same time, the issue of adolescent development, youth culture, and juvenile delinquency came to the fore. The rapid spread of youthful preferences in fashion, popular music, sports, vocabulary, dating, and reading attracted the attention of parents, teachers, home and school associations, religious organizations, women's groups, and other civic organizations eager to influence or control the cultural activities of teenagers. Libraries, of course, were confronted with the ever-changing accessibility of popular literature to children,

youth, and the working classes. At the spring 1945 session of the School and Intermediate Libraries Section of the Ontario Library Association, a lively round table discussion, “Are we too conservative in choosing books for young people?” elicited differing comments from librarians who were concerned with the spread of cheap, sordid pulp magazines and unrestricted sales at newsstands of comics featuring gangsters in *Crime Does Not Pay* or the superheroes battling villains in *Exciting Comics*.



These new social trends disturbed many Canadians at home and across the nation. For libraries, issues about suitable reading were not new. The most immediate postwar library examination of undesirable or salacious literature came from the Provincial Librarian of Saskatchewan, Jessie Bothwell, in 1946. She was an active member of women's organizations in Regina and was well-regarded for her community work. She

was born in Regina in 1883 and married a Rhodes Scholar, Austin Bothwell, who died in 1928, leaving her as a working mother of three children. After earning a library science certificate from McGill University in 1931, Bothwell became Saskatchewan's Legislative Librarian and was promoted to Provincial Librarian in 1944 in charge of the legislative, open shelf, and travelling libraries. She also spurred the development of a regional libraries act for Saskatchewan in 1946 and became a lifetime member of the Canadian Library Association. She retired in 1951 and died in Regina in 1971.

When the newly elected Saskatchewan Co-operative Commonwealth Federation government formed a seven-member Library Advisory Council in 1945, Jessie Bothwell became a member and its secretary. One of the aims of the Council was to investigate standards for library service. Possibly, this is the genesis of her report at the end of 1946 to the Council that was planning postwar expansion of public libraries. Her report documented arguments for and against questionable materials (mostly on newsstands, not libraries) and outlined contemporary efforts and ideas to control their circulation. There were six sections dealing with (1) the types of periodicals, (2) the arguments for and against, (3) the circulation of literature, (4) the distribution of magazines, (5) the efforts to control circulation, (6) three appendices with statistics on magazine circulation and a bibliography used for the report.

Types. Bothwell classed undesirable periodicals into five categories: (1) salacious and pornographic; (2) low-grade fiction specializing in love, crime, and westerns; (3) confession magazines such as *True Story*; (4) movie magazines; and (5) comic books. She noted there were already Canadian legal restrictions that could be brought to bear against the first class, which many people considered reasonable. The other categories were inexpensive and widely circulated across North America despite their objectionable, tantalizing features.

Arguments. In summarizing arguments about these periodicals, Bothwell stressed they were a kind of “literary malnutrition” that encouraged lazy reading and escapism. The emphasis on sex, violence and crude portrayal of human character indicated a decline in moral standards. Some materials were a poor substitute for more constructive leisure activities. She noted the argument that comic reading was associated with juvenile delinquency and dubious character formation. However, many people pointed to freedom read on the part of adults as a prime defence. As well, the step-ladder theory of reading and the potential of broadening a person’s knowledge of contemporary life were possible benefits. Further, attacking magazines alone could not solve the general problem of moral development

because movies, radio, and popular songs were alternative questionable sources adults, adolescents, and children could access. Often, defenders stated that the causes of juvenile delinquency lay much deeper than reading comics.

Circulation and Distribution. Bothwell provided some interesting information on Canadian magazine reading habits post-1945 but was not able to identify specific figures for ‘problem’ magazines. She had to rely on American figures for the general classes she described. She felt the sale of American magazines followed patterns south of the border where comic books exceeded all other magazine genres in terms of readership: the monthly readership was estimated to be 100,000,000 per month. Popular weeklies, such as *Liberty* and *Colliers*, stood second in line. Women’s magazines came in third at just under 25,000,000 per month, followed by movie, confession and detective magazines. News and home and garden magazines were less popular than their newsstand rivals. There were only a few pulp magazines or comics published in Canada, and just ten percent of a 1941 poll read ‘story magazines’ (*Redbook*, *True Story*, etc.) Tobacco shops, general stores, and drug stores served as important retail outlets for these affordable magazines. She reported Canadian sales of \$36,487,000 for books, magazines, and stationery for all of Canada in 1941.

Controls. The fifth section got to the heart of the matter, i.e., the control of controversial periodicals through legal means. Bothwell went into some detail on five fronts. She began by noting the federal Criminal Code prohibited the publication, sale, display, and distribution of mailing obscene matter that might corrupt morals. Provincial Attorney-Generals were responsible for enforcement. The federal post office had the power to bar obscene, immoral, seditious or indecent items from the mail. The federal Customs Tariff Act could seize seditious, immoral or indecent publications at the border, therefore preventing entry into Canada. These methods were workable, but it was not feasible to stretch the legal powers too far, as in the case of movie or confession magazines. Bothwell recounted the efforts to impose a tariff on periodicals in 1931 by the Bennett

government that ended unsuccessfully because American firms began publishing magazines in Canada after the tax was introduced. The tax was repealed in 1935.

Provincial regulations were apparently not effective either. Provinces could legislate police in regard to public morals and delegate responsibility to municipalities. Municipal councils also controlled the licensing of newsdealers. A special sales tax on classes of periodicals was also possible through provincial legislation but there were problems concerning the collection of this tax, not to mention its unpopularity with the public. The report broached the difficult issue of grading periodicals, possibly into adult or juvenile classifications. The whole issue of establishing these grades, either by self-regulation or by the government, was left unsaid.

A second front, one educators and librarians had favoured for many years, was to provide alternative, wholesome reading, thereby opening the possibility of low-grade readers eventually transitioning to better publications. Of course, many of these readers did not use libraries. “Pressure must be put on publishers to bring out an increasing number of good books in paper-bound editions which are colourful, attractive and easy to read. The newsstands must also be encouraged to carry these.” Getting children to learn the ‘library habit’ at an early age was another potential counter to objectionable magazines and comics.

Bothwell then outlined attempts to influence magazine content. A community-based approach — organized protests by women’s groups and community organizations against the “worst offenders” might induce publishers to “clean-up their publications.” As well, parents and teachers in homes and schools could influence better reading habits. Possibly, publishers themselves adhere to higher standards through self-regulating codes. Bothwell then turned to children’s reading, a concern to many educators, politicians, and librarians.



The fourth section on controls, that is, the intelligent use of comics, recognized this form of entertainment was likely to become a permanent feature.

Already, some teachers realized that graphics, simple language, and comics type helped pupils grasp ideas more quickly. Comics could be an inspiration for artwork, posters, and dramatic productions and for instilling forward looking attitudes, ideas, and

vocabulary building for some children.

Finally, the report dealt with the potential to immunize children and adolescents against undesirable literature. Bothwell noted the conclusion of a recent British Columbia report on social welfare and education which recommended the government "lend every possible encouragement to the establishment and development of community centres, and the greater use of school buildings for recreational physical education, and other leisure-time purposes under the leadership of trained personnel." With sufficient outlets for activities and a well-rounded life of work and play, children and young adults (a terminology that was becoming prevalent in libraries) would spend less time with comic books.

Jessie Bothwell's report was the most substantive library report on the broader issue of controversial publications in Canada for many years. She did not elaborate on federal censorship of publications because these were not available for purchase by libraries. Nor did she wade into the issue of self-censorship by

librarians selecting books. For the most part, she did not have to because libraries avoided steamy publications and they restricted adult access to risqué novels and controversial non-fiction subjects that adults normally had to request to read. Some publications that were sold in stores, such as Erskine Caldwell's *Tragic Ground* or the magazine *1946 Cartoon*, were subjected to criminal court actions during 1946. The Attorney-General in Ontario deemed these items salacious or obscene; however, court judges ruled otherwise during short trials and the charges against the Toronto book dealers and distributors were subsequently dismissed by early 1947. These test cases demonstrated the difficulty in pursuing criminal charges in the Canadian court system against realistic fiction and comic depictions of army jokes.

When the Ontario Library Association formed an Intellectual Freedom Committee in June 1948, it endorsed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and adopted a 'watch and ward' tactic to investigate any perceived infringements affecting libraries and librarians. However, efforts by the American Library Association to counter intolerance, suppression of free speech, and censorship with its revision of the Library Bill of Rights in 1948, did not really influence OLA or library practice in Canada. For Bothwell and many others, the larger question of censorship and the production or distribution of published material was of less concern because her support for the established role of the library to substitute good literature to counter the "low-grade magazines" struck a responsive note. Indeed, Bothwell became chair of the Canadian Library Association's Committee on Undesirable Literature for a short time in 1950–51, and two years later, this committee, now headed by Edgar Robinson (chief librarian of Vancouver Public Library), submitted a report to the federal Special Committee on Sale and Distribution of Salacious and Indecent Literature that reiterated this position:

"That we are convinced that the most effective means of combatting [sic]the bad book is by substituting the good book. That we believe that the demand for undesirable reading can be

decreased by increasing the number of libraries, and, with them, the supply of acceptable reading matter. ”

By the mid-1950s, the ‘Golden Age’ of comic books and mass-market pulp magazines was drawing to a close. American publishers introduced the Comics Code Authority in 1954 to self-regulate the content of comic books and appease critics. Paperback novels, radio dramas, and television shows had eroded the popularity of long-standing magazines such as *Love Story Magazine* or *Weird Tales*. Most adults using libraries were conservative in their literary tastes and reluctant to alter existing conditions in the sphere of intellectual freedom. It was a complacency based on community standards that few librarians were prepared to challenge. Yet, there were signs of liberalization: the 1953 CLA brief to the Senate had stated that censorship was ultimately more harmful than good. In a few short years, the courts would reverse the ban on the novel *Peyton Place*, and bolder libraries would venture to circulate *Lolita*.

There is an [online tribute to Jessie Bothwell](#) by the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association that was originally prepared in 1975.

Read my earlier blog on the acceptance of [The Grapes of Wrath](#) by chief librarian, Alexander Calhoun, Calgary Public Library, 1939.

Monday, May 27, 2024

Lapsed Canadian Carnegie Library Grants, 1901–1922

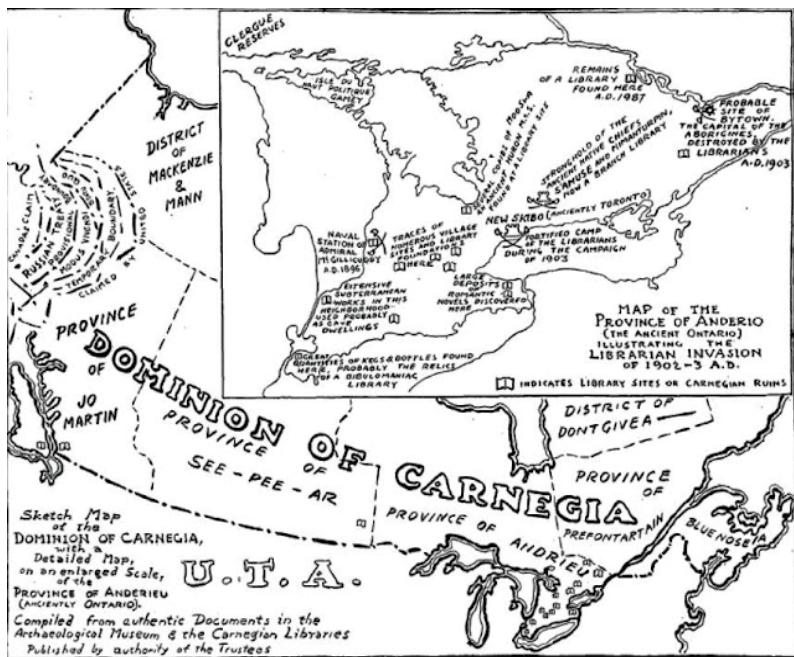
At the turn of the 20th century, the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie rapidly became an internationally recognized supporter of public libraries in Anglo-Saxon countries. In Canada, in the period 1901–22, 125 buildings were erected as libraries using grants promised by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The terms for receiving a grant directly from Carnegie personally or the Carnegie Corporation before the grant period ended in 1917 were straightforward. After a community representative(s) outlined the need for a public library and a promise of funding was secured, two commitments were required from local municipalities before funds for a building were released: a suitable site and a promise to provide at least ten percent of the total grant for annual operating expenses. There were also two further requirements, one that boosted the social standing of public library service: the library must be free to its citizens at the point of entry and, from 1908 onward, applicants had to submit building plans for final approval before receiving funds. Most architectural arrangements were made locally. Carnegie and his personal secretary, James Bertram, who managed most of the library correspondence, often insisted on dealing with elected officials and library trustees. The standard Carnegie formula for awarding grants was approximately two dollars per capita.

There are many books, articles, and internet sources of information on the Carnegie program in Canada. A standard printed reference is the 1984 work by Margaret Beckman, Stephen Langmead, and John Black, *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario* published in Toronto by Dundurn Press. However, there were some communities — thirty-one in all — that sought and received a promise of Carnegie funds to build a library which never reached the construction stage. These communities eventually saw their

opportunity lapse. There were many reasons why these communities lost the chance to build a library with the promised funding:

- people were not convinced that a public library was necessary;
- a few municipalities officially declined the Carnegie offer;
- there was opposition to increasing the annual tax burden, that is 10% of the promised grant;
- the requirement to pass a bylaw to create a free library was not achieved;
- local communities were unable to secure a suitable site;
- the requirement that it be purpose built as a library became objectionable;
- after 1908 building plans had to be approved by James Bertram and he rejected some because they were too ornate or featured non-library space for features such as museums or offices;
- many people, including organized labour, objected to ‘tainted’ or ‘blood’ money given Carnegie’s controversial record in suppressing the Pennsylvania Homestead Strike in 1892;
- anti-American attitudes despite Carnegie’s enthusiasm for Anglo-Saxon community governance;
- some communities requested additional or reduced funds that were not approved Bertram;
- local apathy or confusion about the stipulations of the grant promise.

The acceptance of a Carnegie grant was often controversial and subject to many comments in the contemporary press, such as humorous graphic printed in Toronto by *The Moon* on February 21, 1903.



Because Carnegie was viewed as a foreign figure or as an ardent capitalist, many writers have assumed that lapsed or refused grants were motivated by a desire to avoid associating with Carnegie and creating memorials to his name. But again, a few case studies reveal the complexity of involvement with the Carnegie library program. The largest grant, \$150,000 to Montréal, ground to a halt in 1903 after formidable opposition from the Catholic Archbishop, censorship concerns, and the linguistic divide in the city. In Ontario, Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) received three promises: a grant of \$10,000 in 1902, an increase to \$30,000 in 1909, and then an additional \$10,000 in 1910. Despite some delays with building plans, the city was ready to erect a \$40,000 building by early 1912. However, Bertram reduced the grant by \$10,000 in March 1912 because revised 1911 population census figures indicated fewer people than the official application, which was based on municipal assessment. As a result, everything collapsed; the

library board and council preferred a larger building and the project was lost. Halifax declined its \$75,000 offer after it was unable to get a suitable site and became embroiled in a legal battle about its authority to accept. St. John's \$50,000 promise lapsed after its building proposal included museum and offices which did not receive approval. Saskatoon, a relatively new city in a new province, decided not to proceed with its \$30,000 offer after its request to raise the amount to \$75,000 in July 1912 due to building costs was turned down by Bertram.

Smaller places were usually in a more precarious financial state, especially in Ontario. Tilbury's original \$5,000 grant, approved before the WW I, was rescinded by the Carnegie Corporation in the mid-1920s. The entire project was beset by a series of false starts at the tendering stage, a reluctance to submit a free library bylaw to the electors, requests for additional money, delays because of municipal funding problems, a prohibitive rise in costs, and bitter local rivalry over site selection. Otterville, a police village situated within the Oxford County, was considered by Bertram to be too small for a grant; instead, he promised \$6,000 to the township of South Norwich in March 1915. Special legislation permitting townships to form boards was duly arranged by the province in 1916, but the war effort scuttled any further movement in this direction until January 1923, when township electors refused to pass a free bylaw. Consequently, the award to South Norwich lapsed. Trenton received a promise for \$10,000 in April 1911 and passed its free bylaw; however, when local library efforts flagged the provincial library Inspector, Walter Nursey, rescinded its free status in 1913, and Bertram judged the endeavour finished. Efforts to revive the Trenton pledge after WW I failed. Bertram testily advised that its revised proposal to construct a library as a war memorial should be financed by a local community, not an "outside agency." Caledonia's \$6,000 promise lapsed because its free status was revoked when it failed to comply with provincial regulations. Thessalon, which received a \$8,000 promise, requested a smaller amount since representatives felt that \$500 (not \$800) per annum was sufficient for its library. Similarly, Neepawa (Manitoba) assessed that it could not commit to the ten percent annual tax

expenditure and asked for a reduced promise: Bertram refused based on his knowledge that \$600/year was already the bare minimum needed for adequate service.

Eventually, the communities that experienced problems with Carnegie funding did build public libraries at their own expense. The library story did not end because library advocates continued to press for better services. Larger cities, such as Halifax and Montréal, now boast prominent central library faculties. Smaller communities are part of larger municipal or regional systems. For the most part, the history of their lapsed grants remains to be told in more detail because attention has been focused on the architecture and stories of successful Carnegie promises. A listing of lapsed Canadian grants follows:

Province	Community	Promise in \$\$\$	Date of Award
Alberta	Raymond	10,000	Dec. 24, 1909
Manitoba	Neepawa	6,000	Jan. 8, 1908
Manitoba	Brandon	36,000	July 9, 1913
Newfoundland	St. John's	50,000	March 25, 1901
Nova Scotia	Amherst	5,000	Feb. 6, 1907
Nova Scotia	Halifax	75,000	Febr. 4, 1902
Nova Scotia	Yarmouth	4,000	Oct. 3, 1901
Nova Scotia	Truro	10,000	Oct. 4, 1902
Nova Scotia	Sydney	15,000	March 8, 1901
Ontario	Arthur	7,500	March 13, 1909
Ontario	Beeton	5,000	May 16, 1911
Ontario	Chesley	10,000	Jan. 6, 1912

Ontario	Merrickville	2,500	April 8, 1907
Ontario	Milton	5,000	Jan. 29, 1906
Ontario	Newmarket	10,000	March 29, 1911
Ontario	Paisley	5,000	Jan. 8, 1908
Ontario	Petrolia	10,000	Dec. 13, 1907
Ontario	Strathroy	7,500	March 21, 1908
Ontario	Thessalon	8,000	Aug. 28, 1908
Ontario	*Port Arthur*	10,000	April 11, 1902
Ontario	Port Arthur	30,000	Feb. 1, 1909
Ontario	Port Arthur	add 10,000	April 16, 1910
Ontario	Port Arthur	less 10,000	March 18, 1912
Ontario	Trenton	10,000	April 8, 1911
Ontario	Gananoque	10,000	Aug. 11, 1911
Ontario	Otterville	6,000	March 16, 1915
Ontario	Caledonia	6,000	Dec. 8, 1913
Ontario	Millbrook	8,000	Dec. 8, 1913
Ontario	Tilbury	5,000	July 23, 1914
Ontario	Tilbury	add 2,000	March 11, 1918
Québec	Montréal	150,000	July 23, 1901
Québec	Sherbrooke	15,000	Febr. 4, 1902
Québec	Trois-Rivières	10,000	April 11, 1902
Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	30,000	May 16, 1911
Saskatchewan	Indian Head	10,000	May 8, 1908

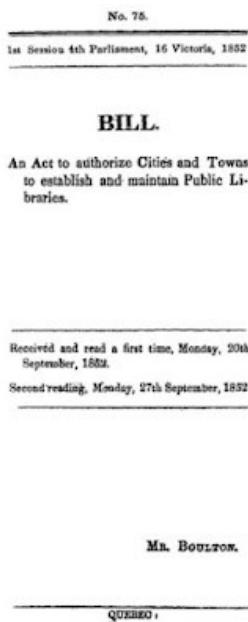
* The 1902 Port Arthur promise was rescinded and replaced in 1909–10. It was increased to \$30,000.

My two earlier blogs on Carnegie libraries are on the [Brantford Library](#) constructed in 1904 and the [Brockville Library](#) opened in 1904.

My blog on William Austin Mahoney, who was the architect for many Carnegie libraries in Ontario is at [this link](#).

Saturday, May 11, 2024

Pre-Confederation Public Libraries in Canada West/Ontario, 1841–1867



In 2007, I made a presentation at the Canadian Library Association in St. John's on the development of public libraries in Canada before 1867. This period, for the most part, has been dominated in historiography by the growth of mechanics' institutes. By the middle of the 19th century in the Province of Canada (the provinces of Ontario and Quebec after Confederation, 1867) many people were borrowing books from libraries located in a variety of local organizations, such as library associations, mechanics' institutes, and Sunday schools. Some groups, such as the Toronto Mechanics' Institute, Quebec Library, or the

Montreal Mercantile Library Association, were incorporated under separate laws in the 1840s. Increasingly, legislators recognized the need to enact enabling public legislation regulating the establishment, holdings, and activities of dozens of existing and potential new libraries. The impetus for public libraries came from three sources.

Egerton Ryerson was the first to encourage the free-of-charge tax-supported public library concept with his *Common School Act of 1850*. This Act authorized the establishment of 'district libraries' in Canada West (later Ontario) by providing for libraries in 'common' (public) schools. Ryerson followed up by

publishing extensive regulations in 1853 to cover book selection, provincial grants, the appointment of librarians, circulation records, and reports to the Dept. of Public Instruction he superintended. These libraries were free public libraries, i.e., there was no charge at the point of access, tax funding was authorized, and universal access for children and women (not just adult males) was encouraged. However, the location in school houses often mitigated book use by adults and after two decades local support for these libraries had greatly diminished.

A second legislative effort came in 1851 when Robert Bell, a Member of Parliament for Lanark (Ontario), introduced a bill to facilitate the formation of mechanics' institutes and library associations. His law (and subsequent similar acts in other provinces) contained influential ideas about public libraries. It recognized that a public library would be available to persons through voluntary decisions, not mandated legal regulations. The *Library Association and Mechanics' Institute Act of 1851* established that libraries would be governed by local boards of trustees mostly independent from control by municipal politicians, a 'special purpose body' in modern public administrative terminology. Further, the Act provided public recognition of libraries as incorporated bodies through public legislation, thereby creating the opportunity for provincial grants in the public interest to supplement local fundraising efforts. However, unlike the Ryerson scheme this legislation did not stipulate public funding, although permissive Legislative grants were made to dozens of institutes and associations (as well as combinations of both) until 1858 when funding ceased due to an economic downturn.

A third stimulus for legislative initiatives took no notice of free libraries in schools or subscription libraries in associations and institutes. This development attempted to emulate the establishment of free public libraries in the United Kingdom and the United States. There is evidence for this trend shortly after 1850. Canadian efforts focused on the establishment of free library service by municipal corporations which were encouraged by the famous Baldwin Act of 1849. This important

legislation permitted the incorporation of cities, towns, villages, and townships governed by locally elected councils across Canada West. William Henry Boulton, the Conservative member for Toronto in the Legislative Assembly, introduced a bill in 1852 which was essentially identical to the public library act passed by the American state of Massachusetts in the previous year (1851). His bill was premature: at this time, only a handful of municipal corporations existed in Canada West and in Canada East (Quebec) there was no general municipal legislation until 1855. The bill was not read a third time and died at the end of the parliamentary session. Later, in 1866, when support for Ryerson's scheme had waned and mechanics' institutes were experiencing financial difficulties, Alexander Morris, a Liberal-Conservative member for the riding of Lanark South, sponsored novel legislation that supported the establishment of free public libraries by municipalities but also allowed a role for potential donors to contribute to the support and management of a semi-independent board. However, because a political union of Canadian colonies was well underway, Morris' bill was discharged in August 1866 at the end of the Province of Canada's last Parliament (1863–66).

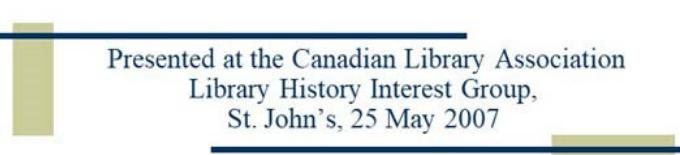
Throughout this period, subscription libraries (often called library associations and occasionally in Canada social libraries) were established in all Canadian colonies. These 'public libraries' were accessible to all residents of a community (mostly males) but not generally free because they required voluntary payments. They performed a public function but were not agencies of the state. For the most part, the Canadian historiography of the subscription library has emphasized its social role as a prototype, a stage towards the development of the modern free public library. However, given the pre-Confederation efforts to establish free libraries in schools and the abortive bills of 1852 and 1866, it can be seen that the subscription library was less important as a model for public funding and more important as an exemplar to establish the public library's local roots by its identification with a sense of community, by its reliance on boards of management composed of citizen trustees, and by its example that access would be on a

voluntary basis.

My article on proposed public library legislation for the Province of Canada (now Ontario and Quebec) in 1852. The bill was originally published in *Ex Libris Association Newsletter* 42 (Fall 2007): 15–18. See my earlier blog post on [William Henry Boulton](#).

My article on public library legislation that was not passed by legislators of the United Canadas in 1866. Originally published in *Ex Libris Association Newsletter* 44 (Fall 2008): 10–13. See my earlier blog post on [Alexander Morris](#).

The PowerPoint presentation I made in 2007 follows.



Presented at the Canadian Library Association
Library History Interest Group,
St. John's, 25 May 2007

PRE-CONFEDERATION PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CANADA WEST/ONTARIO

by Lorne Bruce

Presentation Outline

- 1. development of a “public library” concept in Upper Canada/Canada West prior to 1850, i.e., subscription libraries available to groups or individuals or school public libraries prior to Municipal Corporations Act of 1849 (Baldwin Act)
- 2. review “public library” Acts of 1850 (schools & municipalities) and 1851 (voluntary associations of MI & LA) and growth of libraries in municipalities
- 3. review free public library bills of 1852 and 1866 and the evolution of a new “public library” concept, i.e., the change to libraries established and funded by local government for community use without charge after 1850
- 4. consider historical viewpoints: 1) liberal-democratic basis for localized public library growth in Ontario; 2) the importance of both Ryerson’s library scheme and mechanics’ institutes in the evolution to free library legislation in 1882; 3) the influence of American state legislation and UK legislation in Ontario prior to 1867.

2

[1] “Public libraries” before 1850: libraries for various memberships

SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY: library established and operated for benefit of fee paying members — usually not for designed children or women

- Mechanics’ Institutes – instruction and public lectures for adult education and use of libraries for members (first MI in Toronto in 1830)
- Library Associations – reference and circulating collections for use by proprietors or subscribers on membership basis (first one at Niagara in 1800)
- Athenaeums – literary, scientific, or artistic groups also forming a library for members often featuring current magazines and newspapers
- Literary societies or book clubs – libraries for members with general interest in literature and cultural pursuits or book exchanges among members
- Agricultural societies – some developed rural libraries or exchanged books/newspapers esp. in 1830s and 40s (e.g., as farmers’ institutes)
- Mercantile libraries – library for use of business clerks, bookkeepers, etc.
- Subscription libraries – libraries that members paid an annual or initial fee to use
- Library Company – libraries that members contributed money for “bookstock” and paid an annual fee to use. Possible to pass shares to heirs.
- Scientific Societies – library formed for use of members’ interest in science

3

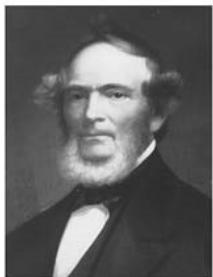
[1] “Public libraries” prior to 1850: common school libraries

Prior to 1871 elementary education in Ontario was not free and most children attended “common schools” for short periods. Many children and adolescents attained literacy skills in Sunday schools which were common or denominational (esp. after 1830s). Book collections in schools were the first to receive tax-support in Upper Canada.

- **SCHOOL LIBRARY** – normally collection of books in school room (common and grammar schools) for use by young children and adolescents
- American school district libraries operated in New York (1835) and Massachusetts (1837) serving students and public on free basis in an area (usually townships). This concept spread to many states, e.g. Ohio and Michigan
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY** – collection operated by individual church or collective of churches to teach children religion and basic literacy skills with some borrowing privileges for good attendance, etc. Very popular among all denominations.
- religious groups also provided literature to schools: Sunday School Union Society of Upper Canada organized many libraries, usually open to adults as well
- tax support for books in both types of school libraries first legislated in 1816 for schools (esp. Sunday schools) in Upper Canada – an established practice by 1820s although not to exceed £100 per district (10 districts)

4

[2] Charles Duncombe, 1792–67



An early library promoter, Charles Duncombe was an American physician born in Connecticut who moved to Upper Canada. In 1828 he was elected to the Legislative Assembly. He chaired a comprehensive *Report upon the subject of education* in 1836 to improve and better finance schools which included proposals for more accessible libraries using New York state school district libraries for children and adults as a model. His bill to improve common schools did not receive royal assent in 1836. In 1837, he was a leader in the rebellion in London district and escaped to the USA. Conservatives in the legislature established another Education Commission report in 1839 that countered this American inspired library proposal. Though granted amnesty in 1843, Duncombe never returned to Canada but his proposals on libraries were revived by Egerton Ryerson.

5

[2] Egerton Ryerson, 1803–82



Born 1803 in Norfolk County. Founded the popular Methodist periodical, *Christian Guardian*, in 1829 and was head of the Methodist Book and Publishing House. He was opposed to both clergy reserves and ecclesiastical control of education. He was Superintendent (1844–76) of public schools in Upper Canada (UC) as well as an advocate of free compulsory education and access to libraries. His *Report on a system of public elementary instructions* of 1847 emphasized:

- need for circulating libraries for students and adults in school sections
- central lists for books and regulatory control of operations
- voluntary community efforts

Ryerson's annual school report in 1850 located 70 school libraries in UC and upon his retirement in 1876 there were more than 1,000

6

[2] Political features of Ryerson's public libraries in Common School Act, 1850

- Authority: enabling legislation and regulations established by colonial and later provincial government
- Governance: locally by school boards or municipalities – required local administration and funding establishment and funding for different types of "public libraries":
 - common school libraries for students and ratepayers
 - general public libraries run by municipalities (Municipal Corporations Act 1849 – townships, villages, towns, cities, and counties)
 - teachers' libraries (occupational type)
 - public libraries in government institutions, e.g. asylums and penitentiaries
- Tax support: colonial legislature on matching basis to £3,000 each year (also Sunday schools) until 1867 and then the province of Ontario with tax support by local governments and school trustees
- Access: free for students and public of community (school sections, townships, etc.) – including children and women often excluded in subscription libraries
- Legitimacy: establishment of libraries required authorization by ratepayers at public meetings and local by-laws (a form of direct democracy)

7

[2] Ryerson's libraries: general features, 1853–76

- regulations published in 1853 were extensive covering selection, grants, appointment of librarians, circulation, book cards, forms, etc.
- the controversial central Education Depository in Toronto supplied Sunday schools; common and grammar schools; mechanics' institutes; association, prison & asylum libraries. It became the focus of many attacks upon Ryerson by booksellers and George Brown of the *Globe* in the 1860s.
- library catalogue published in 1857 and only occasionally updated – it focused on children's reading & prize books, primers and texts, and did not include much fiction or current adult recreational reading
- most libraries were small especially if divided into school sections (e.g. 200 books) and not well established in some areas (e.g. eastern Ontario).
- provided efficient distribution of books at low prices, esp. "Irish Readers" basic texts for Protestant and Catholic students.
- his system suited to original rural-base in common schools – pop. of UC in 1851 = 900,000 but grew to 1,900,000 in 1881. Libraries were small and most located in south-western and central Ontario.
- in urban communities, MIs and LAs continued to be the main source for library books.

8

[2] Public Libraries in urban places, Canada West, 1862

<u>Place (5000+ population)</u>	<u>Common School Libraries</u>	<u>Volumes</u>	<u>Other Public Libraries</u>	<u>Volumes</u>
Belleville – 6,227			1	900
Brantford – 6,251	1	42	1	1,150
Cobourg – 4,975	3	1,183	3	1,400
Guelph – 5,076	1	94	1	1,560
Hamilton – 19,096	1	2,725	4	6,129
Kingston – 13,745	2	2,382	2	2,800
London – 11,555	2	1,427	2	2,500
Ottawa – 14,669			1	1,600
St. Catharines – 6,284			1	400
Toronto – 44,821	4	6,336	9	41,421
Totals - 91 places (pop. 214,826)	56	25,588	101	101,472
Totals - 5000 pop +		14189		59860 9

[2] Mechanics' Institutes and Library Associations, 1851–58

- approximately 70 MI in 1850 but only 20 received legislative grants under provisions of the 1851 Act
- Act of 1851 sponsored by Robert Bell, a reformer representing Lanark in Legislative Assembly. Bell helped found Lanark Agri. Soc.; was an education trustee, a member of Carleton Place Library. Assn.; a temperance advocate; and village postmaster
- Bell's act built on existing individual incorporations of MIs (e.g., Toronto in 1847) that had been developed as public acts
- between 1851 and 1858 the number of MI & LA increased to about 143 in UC & LC but many of these were small operations that local groups formed in get grants of \$200
- many incorporations between 1851–58 were combinations of library associations, mechanics' and farmers' institutes
- 1858: after a review of MI and LA by the Agriculture Dept. received only 41 replies in Canada West, legislative votes of supply for MI and LA were reduced to \$140 per institute and then eliminated after 1859. A number of members of Parliament indicated MIs were not achieving their goals or as valuable as agricultural societies.

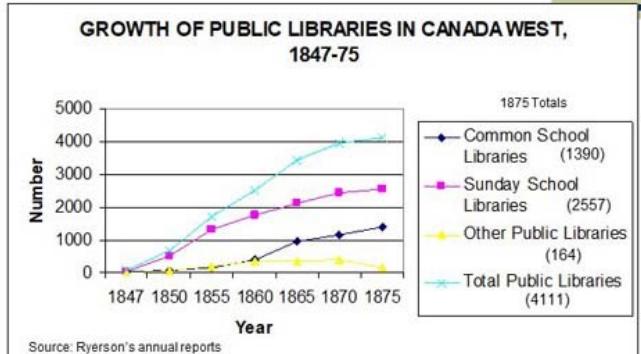
10

[2] Mechanics' Institutes and Library Associations, 1858–68

- no legislative grants were distributed in the Province of Canada after 1859 except to some established scientific groups, e.g. Canadian Institute in Toronto
- spring 1860: Ryerson is unable to extend his provisions for distribution of books from the Depository to MI and LA on same basis as school libraries.
- 1860s: gradually many MIs and LAs closed due to financial woes.
- 1868: after Confederation the Ontario government revived MIs by reintroducing matching \$200 grants for evening classes and books. A catalogue of 400 technical works was published to assist with building "suitable collections" – including after 1869 approved general literature (not fiction)
- a 1868 survey of about 50 surviving institutes elicited 22 replies reporting holdings of 28,057 – 13 of these received grants and most had been formed in the 1840s in larger urban centres

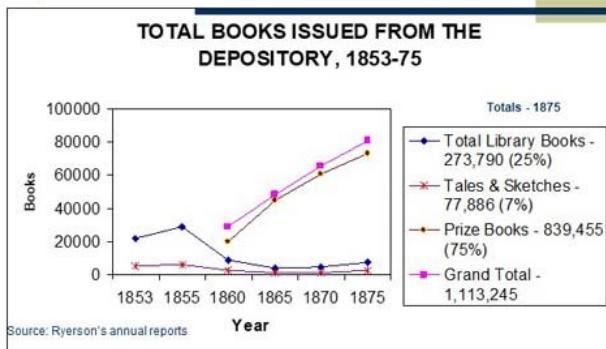
11

[2] Growth of public libraries, 1847-75



12

[2] Depository books issued to libraries, 1853-75



13

[3] William Henry Boulton (1812–74)



A lawyer and politician in Canada West who was selected Mayor of Toronto from 1845–47 and again in 1858. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly representing Toronto as a Conservative member in 1844, 1848 and 1851. An early member of the Family Compact but later a “populist” Tory figure who supported American republican political ideas, such as an elective Legislative Council, after 1850. Boulton’s residence, the Grange, featured a large residential library. He assisted with 1847 legislation to incorporate the Toronto Mechanics’ Institute as a public act (10 & 11 Vic., c. 102) which helped secure annual legislative grants. His 1852 unsuccessful library bill was almost entirely a copy of the earlier Massachusetts law replicated for the Province of Canada.

[3] Alexander Morris (1826–89)



Born in Perth, Ont. A lawyer, a member of the Legislative Assembly in Ontario (1878–86), a federal Liberal-Conservative in Macdonald’s government (1861–72) who viewed Confederation favourably. He authored works on Canadian topics, such as *Nova Britannia* that predicted a Canadian federation and sponsored Acts to end public executions and to introduce municipal registration of vital statistics. Like Boulton, Morris was interested in using legislation to enable the activities of local government through the participation of residents rather than establishing a comprehensive scheme such as the one Ryerson devised. His unsuccessful 1866 bill for cities and towns was similar to English legislation: it stipulated a public meeting, presence of a mayor, 2/3 majority for ratepayers, a halfpenny rate, pop. limit, ownership of land, and a board of 9 trustees.

[3] Liberal-democratic ideas about local-central government in the two bills

Political Concept	Local-central relationship	Democratic ideas	Administrative values	Decision-making process
<p><u>*Co-ordinate and independent (gradation of authority)</u></p> <p>* Social libraries – voluntary assns.</p> <p>* Boulton: 1852 bill</p>	<p>* Relations are autonomous and cooperative (little or no overlap or joint activity)</p>	<p>* Checks and balances - a "layer cake"</p> <p>* Central bodies: political representation</p> <p>* Local bodies: participation</p>	<p>* Independence (both)</p> <p>* Participation (local)</p>	<p>* Deliberative judgement among as many as possible (esp. local)</p>
<p><u>*Functional partnership</u></p> <p>* Ryerson's library system</p> <p>* A. Morris : 1866 bill</p>	<p>* "Balance"</p> <p>Central power instructs and local government provides service</p>	<p>* J.S. Mill</p> <p>* Representatives at both levels (elective or appointed)</p>	<p>* Efficiency (local)</p> <p>* Competence (central)</p>	<p>* Deliberative in a vertical division of powers from knowledge to action</p>

16

[3] Changing “public library” concepts and conditions prior to 1867

- 1857: formation of Board of Arts and Manufactures to oversee MI & LA and report to Commissioner of Agriculture to better co-ordinate activities.
- the BAM used its legislated mandate to form a “public reference library” available free of charge to public in Toronto and located it in the Toronto Mechanics’ Institute.
- In the 1860s, the University of Toronto allowed the public to use its library and museum free of charge upon registration with its librarian.
- December 1862: a Toronto grand jury recommended the city fund a public reference library as a valuable service for residents but recognized the reluctance of municipal officials to do so.
- 1864: an influential British report by James Fraser on Canadian education criticized Ryerson’s system of libraries and pointed to the successful emergence of English city free libraries and the Boston Public Library.

17

[3] Changing “public library” concepts and conditions after Confederation

- after 1867 Ryerson and his department emphasized prize books for students and the fact that they used free public school libraries. He did continue to supply other public libraries but was forced to defend his “monopoly” in the book trade from the Education Depository
- August 1871: Toronto Board of Trade investigated establishment of a “public library” on a subscription basis for residents — a last major voluntary effort
- by the early 1870s MIs were facing serious criticism about their “public” usefulness: esp. composition of their membership, the circulation of light reading, and the rationale for providing public funds for their operations.
- when Ryerson retired in 1876 the period of public libraries supplied through public schools effectively ended
- commentators and newspaper editorials advocated free public library legislation pointing to successful examples in English and American municipalities

18

[3] Liberal-democratic ideas on local governance in the two free library bills

- Boulton and Morris were both Conservatives but like the Grits/Liberals in Canada West they were concerned with efficient and representative local institutions for developing social policies in an urbanizing, industrial society
- belief that local government was essential for harmonious society: it had an educative function, participative process, invoked civic pride, fostered belief in progress
- need for a municipal basis for libraries (following Baldwin Act of 1849) not voluntary incorporation of groups as before 1850
- boards of citizen trustees rather than direct municipal operation (voluntary legacy)
- regulations on usage: established by board (voluntary legacy of trusteeship)
- annual meetings (voluntary legacy)
- access: free to all residents
- local finances: power to tax residents
- accountability: audits, power of appointment by municipal and school bodies
- no provision for legislative grants: minimal central govt./active local govt.

19

[4] Success or failure? – Ryerson's public library system

- Ryerson's efforts to control selection and distribution of library books was completely rejected after his retirement in 1876. The Education Depository was closed in 1881 – booksellers and publishers replaced it.
- Ryerson's common school library model for adults use was mostly abandoned by withdrawal of funds and new legislation for free libraries in 1882.
- Ryerson's liberal-democratic faith in use of government for public library services left an important legacy:
 - use of taxation for libraries gained wider acceptance
 - use of legislation and regulations to standardize service
 - free community access to libraries by all residents
- free public library legislation in 1882 – main basis for modern public library as we know it involved these three important principles established by Ryerson and included school appointments on semi-independent boards that had the power to appropriate tax money.
- school libraries, esp. in public schools, were subsequently revived in Ontario after 1902

20

[4] Success or failure? – Mechanics' Institutes and Library Associations

- the operations of MIs in a Canadian context have mostly ignored the reality of the 1851 legislation – i.e. many were formed essentially as library associations. MIs did not operate like their British cousins – e.g., they received legislative grants, included agricultural groups, and were supervised by an agriculture dept. until control passed to the Dept. of Education in 1880
- throughout the 1870s the number of institutes continued to grow but their most successful activity was a circulating library for members: evening classes, lectures, and museum activities were always difficult ventures
- 1872: county inspectors of schools (Ryerson's inspectors) were required to inspect MIs twice a year and only institutes organized in cities, towns, and villages were entitled to grants
- 1881: Inspector S. May's *Special Report on Mechanics' Institutes* concludes: "The majority of the so-called Mechanics' Institutes are only circulating libraries, and that, too, for the dissemination of light literature."
- the "failure" of MIs was mostly due to an overly ambitious program and voluntary basis. The constituency MIs aimed to reach – skilled workmen – was rather small. The library part of MI operations were usually successful because it appealed to a broad range of people. In 1895, Ontario finally changed its legislation to convert MIs into "public libraries."

21

[4] Conclusion: historical issues and further research

- American and British influences in our libraries are more complex than usually articulated:
 - the differences in MIs between Canada and the UK, e.g., the different populations from which they formed their memberships and how they financed their activities
 - the influence of American ideas on school libraries in the 1830s before Ryerson
 - after 1850 public library legislation in Ontario drew upon US state and UK examples in terms of liberal-democratic ideas about the value of local government rather than as a result of the 1867 BNA Act making education a provincial duty
- libraries formed by Sunday schools, agricultural societies and farmers' institutes and other types of subscription libraries need further study to recognize their contributions before Confederation – they greatly outnumbered MIs and reached many children and adults
- Ryerson's scheme: historical studies often view his system in terms of issues such as "buying around" to marginalize booksellers and the controversy over Depository book sales; however, despite the inadequacies of the school system used to distribute books, he emphasized the need for adequate government funding, universal access, and local effort by municipal/school officials to reach both adults and children before MIs, library associations, and free libraries did

22

[4] Conclusion: historical issues and further research

- more research on the various types of public libraries in the pre-Confederation period is required to determine whether historical viewpoints about "social control" or "state formation" – the use of libraries to inculcate ideas controlled by social elites or state administrators – are useful explanations because most subscription libraries "had small membership bases in colonial Canada."
- the incubation stage for free public library legislation in Ontario began before Confederation; in fact, almost 30 years before free library legislation in 1882 with the failure of the bills of 1852 and 1866.
- the expansion of Ryerson's library system, library associations, mechanics' and farmers' institutes in rural Ontario was encouraged by successive provincial governments prior to 1867 in parallel with the development of municipal government

23

Monday, April 29, 2024

Egerton Ryerson's Public School Libraries, 1850–1875



In February 2007, I made a presentation on the common school library system that Egerton Ryerson established for Canada West (after 1867 Ontario) after he became Superintendent of Education in 1844. Ryerson, of course, is considered to be the founder of the Ontario school system and a leading Canadian figure in 19th-century education. And he is also a central figure in the development of 'free' public

libraries in Canadian history. Before Ryerson launched his library scheme in 1853, subscription libraries created to serve specific groups dominated the public space across the southern part of Canada West. Adults could access libraries for a fee in a variety of organizations designed for a diverse clientele such as mechanics' institutes; literary, agricultural and scientific societies; community library associations; and mercantile or commercial groups. But for rural residents, who comprised the majority of the population, access to books could be a difficult proposition. Ryerson recognized this problem and concluded that libraries, i.e. school district libraries, should be supplied through the growth of the school system he was establishing. Similar systems existed in the United States and in the Maritimes to provide reading for adults and school children. In his 1847

Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, he outlined his library plan,

I mean the establishment of *Circulating Libraries* in the various Districts, and as far as possible in the School Sections. To the attainment of this object, local and voluntary co-operation is indispensable. Government may perhaps contribute; it may assist by suggesting regulations, and recommending list of books from which suitable selections can be made; but the rest remains for individual and local efforts to accomplish. And the advantages of the School can be but very partially enjoyed, unless they are continued and extended by means of books.

Over the course of his superintendency, hundreds of school libraries were formed and hundreds of thousands of books were delivered to local communities through the agency of a Book Depository which was established in Toronto. It offered discount prices on books. But, eventually, with the expansion of the frontier in Ontario and population growth, urban communities found public school libraries less attractive to an alternative appearing in Britain and the United States—free municipal public libraries. As well, the government was helping fund another source of library books in hundreds of mechanics' institutes and frequently petitioned by a small, developing book trade to abolish the Depository's monopoly. Nevertheless, Ryerson stood his ground, and the school libraries he created and nourished remained in place until the Depository closed in 1881 and the Ontario Legislature passed the Free Public Libraries Act in 1882. The original presentation follows.

Presented at OLA Super Conference, 1 Feb. 2007

EGERTON RYERSON'S PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES, 1850-75

by Lorne Bruce

Presentation outline

- ◆ background for Ryerson's scheme – formation and support in schools
- ◆ examine its general features and practical workings
- ◆ overview of statistics for 1850-75 – growth
- ◆ pros and cons!! / success or failure!!
- ◆ historical views – conclusion

Egerton Ryerson's Public School Libraries, 1850-75



Egerton Ryerson, n.d.

Born 1803 in Norfolk County. Founded the popular Methodist periodical, *Christian Guardian*, in 1829. One of the founders of Victoria College at Cobourg in 1830s. He was opposed to both clergy reserves and ecclesiastical control of education. Superintendent (1844-76) of public schools in Upper Canada. An advocate of free education: after 1871 schooling became compulsory until the age of 12. Ryerson retired in 1876 and died in 1882.

Background: school libraries prior to 1850

Influences/Origins

- ◆ “school library” – normally collection of books in school room (common and grammar schools)
- ◆ tax support for books in libraries first legislated in 1816 for schools (esp. Sunday schools) in Upper Canada – established by 1820s
- ◆ school library improvements recommended in Charles Duncombe’s reform report on education to UC legislature (1836) and a 2nd report in 1839 by the Education Commission



Background: school libraries prior to 1850

Influences/Origins

- ◆ US: district school libraries in New York (1835) and Massachusetts (1837) to serve students and public at large
- ◆ Ryerson: his own *Report on a system of public elementary instructions* of 1846
 - need for circulating libraries in school sections
 - central lists for books and regulations
 - he emphasized voluntary community efforts

Background: public libraries in Upper Canada c. 1850

- ◆ 1850: Common School Act: Ryerson's "district libraries" in UC – provides for libraries in municipalities
- ◆ 1851 Canadian legislation: literary associations and mechanics' institutes libraries encouraged
- ◆ few urban communities in UC by 1850: largest were Toronto (30,775), Hamilton (4,112), Kingston (11,585), Ottawa (7,760), London (7,000)



Background: public libraries in Upper Canada c. 1850

- ♦ Subscription - social - association libraries – e.g. at Niagara in 1800 (membership fees)
- ♦ mechanics' institutes – e.g. at Toronto in 1830 also charged fees for use of library books but normally no children or women
- ♦ UK: public libraries act of 1850 – Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester
- ♦ US state legislation, e.g. New Hampshire (1849) and Massachusetts (1851)

Ryerson's library system

- ♦ tax-funded by colonial legislature to 1867 then province of Ontario as well as local governments
- ♦ free access for students and public of community (school sections, townships, etc.)
- ♦ founded and managed locally by school boards or municipalities – required local efforts
- ♦ books supplied centrally from the book depository in Toronto after 1853 and a general catalogue (1857). Students eligible for prize books as well.



Founding a common school library: e.g., Twp. of Vaughan, 1853

- ◆ meeting called for creation of public library in Oct.
- ◆ ratepayers eligible to debate and vote on raising £250 by assessment to purchase a library
- ◆ meeting established libraries in school sections
- ◆ school trustees in sections charged with book selection with assistance from a township committee if necessary
- ◆ Ryerson supplied Vaughan with books in Nov. 1853 and township bylaw passed in Dec. 1853

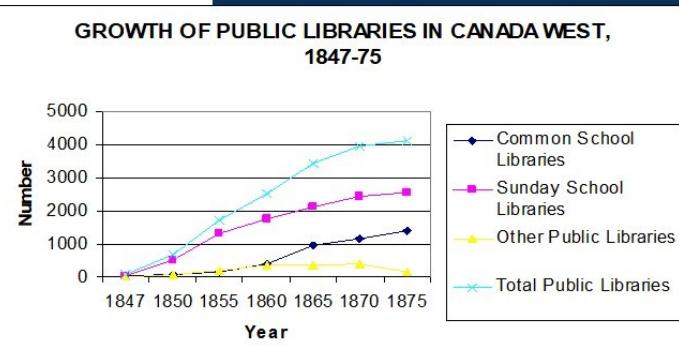
Ryerson's libraries: general features

- ◆ Depository supplied Sunday schools; common schools; mechanics' institutes; association, prison & asylum libraries and grammar schools
- ◆ Regulations published in 1853 were extensive covering selection, grants, appointment of librarians, circulation, book cards, etc.
- ◆ Catalogue published in 1857 and only occasionally updated – lagged behind adult reading habits, esp. fiction
- ◆ libraries were small on average – esp. if divided into school sections (e.g. 200 books) and less numerous in some areas (e.g. eastern Ontario)

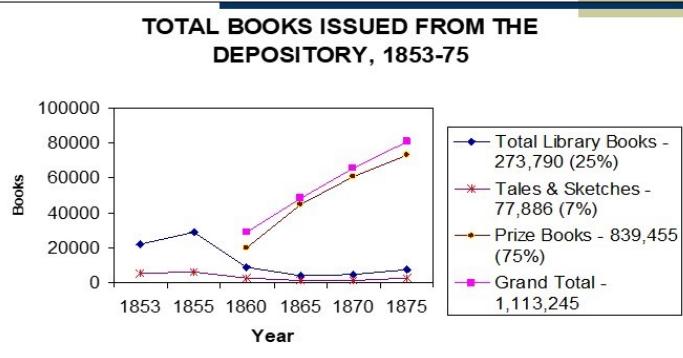
Ryerson's system: practical workings

- ◆ Township libraries: could be centralized or rotating book collections or in each school section
- ◆ “librarians:” could be teachers, principals, officials, trustees – no training but many rules
- ◆ promotion: *Journal of Education* and school inspectors reports
- ◆ book stock: texts mostly instructional (too elementary) or reference works (too advanced for students) with few recreational or pleasurable items
- ◆ promotion of prize books after 1860 rather than libraries

Library growth, 1847-75



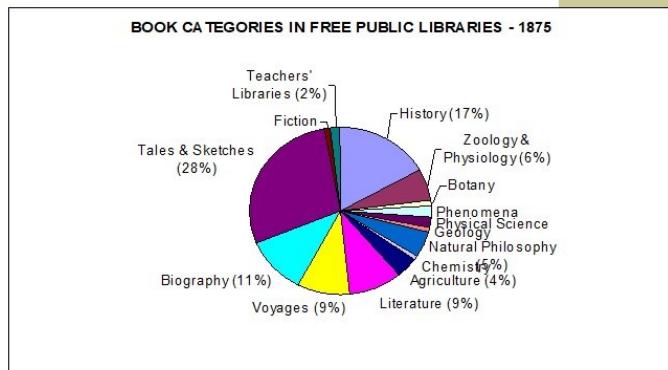
Circulation of books 1853-75



Free Public Libraries in urban places, Canada West 1862

Place (5000+ population)	Common School Libraries	Volumes	Other Public Libraries	Volumes
Belleville			1	900
Brantford	1	42	1	1150
Cobourg	3	1183	3	1400
Guelph	1	94	1	1560
Hamilton	1	2725	4	6129
Kingston	2	2382	2	2800
London	2	1427	2	2500
Ottawa			1	1600
St. Catharines			1	400
Toronto	4	6336	9	41421
Totals - 91 places	56	25588	101	101472
Totals - 5000 pop +		14189		59860

Reading categories of books, 1875 (total volumes = 275,000)

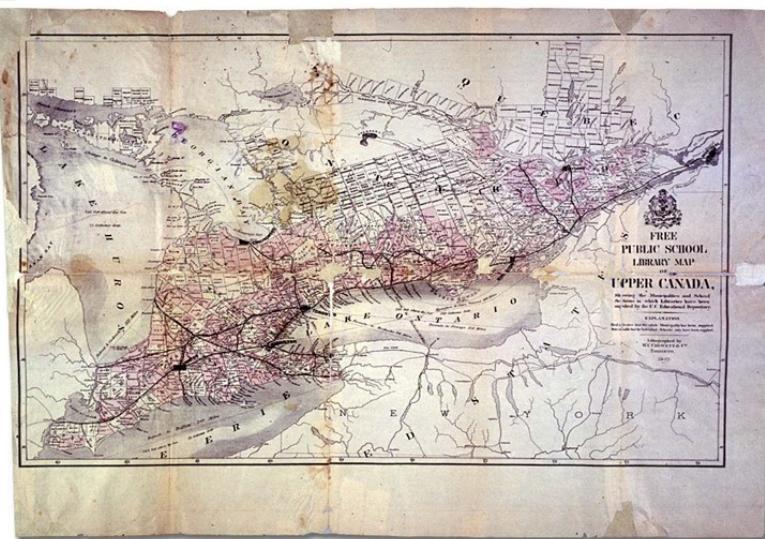


Ryerson's scheme: pros

- ◆ efficient distribution of books at low prices, esp. “Irish Readers” basic texts for Protestant and Catholic students
- ◆ state support – legislation, finance, and governance at all levels
- ◆ suited to original rural-base in common schools – pop. of UC in 1851 = 900,000
- ◆ free access for all public – including women & children
- ◆ oversight from Ryerson and his Education Office through school inspections, legislation, etc., 1853-76

Ryerson's scheme: cons

- ◆ centralized book selection a disadvantage: attacks by booksellers, Toronto *Globe*, and British report of James Fraser (1864) on education
- ◆ no fiction allowed until mid-1860s
- ◆ Parts of southern townships (e.g. east) not developed
- ◆ mostly text books and primers, e.g. Irish readers
- ◆ inattentive management – basic selection, circulation, hours of operation not consistent
- ◆ after 1849 Baldwin Act hundreds of cities, towns, and villages in 1881 with pop. = 1,900,000 increasingly urban
– Ryerson's system used less





Success or failure? – school libraries

- ◆ Ryerson's system fell into disuse in 1880s – libraries were "read out" and not restocked – but his basic "school library" concept was reinvigorated in the 20th century by new ideas and influences long after his retirement
 - ◆ 1) changes in book usage in schools: less emphasis on primers or texts and more on individual works by writers
 - ◆ 2) changes in teaching theory: reading for character development encouraged students to read more broadly
 - ◆ financial support re-established in 1902 at provincial level for school libraries (\$3,000) in Ontario

Success or failure? – public libraries

- ◆ district school library model abandoned in 1880s after his retirement but three lasting achievements:
 - use of tax money for libraries gained wider acceptance
 - universal access to libraries
 - service for both adults and children
- ◆ Education depository closed in 1881 – booksellers and publishers replaced it
- ◆ free public library legislation in 1882 – main basis for modern public library as we know it



Historical views of Ryerson's libraries

- ◆ “state formation,” i.e. library regulations and Depository part of governing classes’ utilization books for moral regulation and political subjugation (Marxist conflict)
- ◆ “social control:” formation of ideas through public reading – more moderate revisionists
- ◆ “Whig view:” progress – more books, more libraries = better society in the present
- ◆ “movement:” functional political partnership between central/local authorities – central body instructs and local bodies supply service – political values are efficiency and participation in representative government



Conclusion: historical research

- ◆ a reasonable “model” for its time (1850) that built on existing ideas more attuned to school library development – one of a number of prototypes for public library development in the 19th century
- ◆ Ryerson’s scheme emphasized need for universal access to reach both children and adults
- ◆ need more research on the relationships with Sunday school libraries, common school libraries and public libraries before 1867 to determine issues such as “social control” or “state formation”
- ◆ issues like “buying around” still with us but seldom studied historically in terms of contemporary advantages or disadvantages

Regarding the conclusion, there was some discussion at OLA, so perhaps a bit more information would be helpful for viewers. The concept of models is often used in historical explanations. The concept of ‘state formation’ has become important in the

colonial experience of Canada West, 1841–67. State formation is the process whereby governing bodies during the period of growing responsible government and public institutions (such as libraries) exercised greater regulatory powers. In this development, government gained greater authority over the urban and rural populace ensuring the advance of liberal democratic rule and inculcating moral, cultural, and economic values aligned with capitalism. Bruce Curtis wrote on this topic four decades ago: “‘Littery Merrit,’ ‘Useful Knowledge,’ and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840–1860,” *Ontario History* 78, no. 4 (1986): 285–311. He concluded that while libraries were believed to promote certain ideals, such as literacy, his research indicated that few adults read the books supplied through Ryerson’s system because book selection was centrally controlled and officially excluded much published literature through the agency of the Book Depository. If the Dept. of Public Instruction sought to make the populace more governable, there must be some doubt about the successful role of the Ryerson system.

It seems, too, more difficult to make the case for another useful model, social control. Social control was a popular topic in library history and education, especially in America, beginning with the revisionist histories of the 1970s. There are many articles concerning its pros and cons due to its imprecise nature. Did Ryerson set out to use libraries to structure controls around public reading as well as provide moral instruction? It is a good question, yet the success of his scheme often relied on local responses, so it is fair to say that there was not just compliance but collaboration in building libraries. Also, there were many limitations to the concept of social control in library history: the degree of general public acceptance, the different levels of public usage, and opponents, especially booksellers or reluctant politicians and taxpayers.

A third model, the one I followed in my *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930*, is less structured, libraries as a social movement. In short, people and groups from all sectors of the population organize formally or

informally to support and produce societal or political change. Ryerson's system displays a political characteristic of liberal democracy: a partnership between central and local authorities with the aim to establish public institutions. The central body instructs and local bodies supply the services. The political values are efficiency and participation in representative, responsible government. In time, a successful movement will eventually diminish because its objectives are mostly achieved and woven into the fabric of government. Thus, the government sponsorship of libraries and universal public access that Ryerson espoused fits this general context until about 1930 when all the major cities and towns in Ontario had established free library service through local plebiscites.

Another influential Canadian historical thesis, the 'liberal order framework' proposed by Ian McKay, asserts that liberal-minded politicians and business leaders successfully shaped the nation's consensus around individualism, private property and capitalist accumulation. This thesis is influenced by the Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, who developed the concept of cultural and social hegemony that reinforced the power of dominant classes. In this political environment, the impetus to create libraries would come from powerful individuals or groups seeking to legislate-regulate libraries and public reading by a 'top down' process. Gramsci is an important representative of Western Marxism.

The ongoing application of new models and theoretical approaches to library history may inject alternative views of the library system Ryerson developed over a quarter-century. Certainly, the recent development of Critical Librarianship, which strives to examine librarianship and library structures in relation to systemic ideologies, offers an opportunity to re-investigate power/knowledge relationships identified by Michel Foucault. For example, his formulation of 'governmentality' (governing people's conduct through positive means) offers a theory of examining power relations in a different way. The prospect of other approaches looms in the future, but these were not part of my 2007 presentation.

Further information on my history of free public school libraries in Canada West can be viewed on the Internet Archive in my [Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930](#) published in 1994.

Friday, April 19, 2024

Citizen Participation in Library Decision-Making: The Toronto Experience by John Marshall (1984)

Citizen Participation in Library Decision-Making: The Toronto Experience edited by John Marshall. Metuchen, New Jersey: School of Library Service, Dalhousie University in association with the Scarecrow Press, 1984. p. 392., illus. and maps.



In the early 1970s, reform-minded politicians began to dominate the old city of Toronto council. Strong mayors, such as David Crombie (1972-78) and John Sewell (1978-80), as well as new city councillors were concerned with the direction of urban development, expanded social services, and transparency in politics. They believed community initiatives and citizen action trumped centralization and bureaucratic

management. In the previous decade, the Toronto Public Library (TPL) had committed to a long-range plan of building larger regional libraries to better serve the growing population. However, there was a legacy of many older, smaller branches extending back to the Carnegie era and the administration of George Locke that had been neglected during this phase of planning. With the influx of immigrants after 1950, Toronto had become a more diverse city with many different neighborhoods that identified with the idea of ‘community.’ Progressive municipal politicians were interested in expanding citizen participation in government; thus, a number of reformist citizens were appointed as library trustees in the first half of the 1970s.

The idea of citizen surveys, public consultation, or ‘friends groups’ working in concert with library boards and library personnel was limited, not new. Yet, the style of political action leaned more to responsiveness with local community advisory groups. With the ongoing construction of a Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library scheduled to open in 1977, TPL’s trustees could forego district branch construction and focus on refurbishing local branches and services. During the next five-year planning cycle, there were major renovations to older branches such as Earlscourt, Dovercourt, Yorkville, Gerrard, Wychwood, and Eastern, and new branches such as Spadina Road, a timely partnership with the Native Canadian Centre. As well, the library’s focus turned to purchasing more Canadian books, decentralizing authority within the TPL pyramidal management structure, equalizing services across the city population, and offering better services to ethnic groups. TPL had a good reputation for Canadiana and George Locke had emphasized Canadian writers, but renewed nationalist sentiment in the 1970s demanded more attention to these resources.

John Marshall, a professor at the University of Toronto library school, noted this reform trend and edited a series of essays by contributors who had participated in this remarkable period which lasted for a brief decade. One might argue that urban reformers had more impact on library services than on other major city services, such as policing and housing. The essays demonstrate the concept of urban reform in relation to library services had many aspects and was by no means a uniform political perspective. Services attuned to local public viewpoints was not a new idea, but library planners now would significantly enlarge the scope of ‘stakeholders,’ a term which quickly gained currency after 1980. John Marshall began his career as a public librarian in 1952 and he retired in 1983 after contributing many insightful library publications. His biography is available at the [Ex Libris Association](#).

My book review on *Citizen Participation* which follows was first published in *Canadian Public Administration* 28(3) September 1985, pp 497–499.

* * * * *

Public participation in the delivery of library services in Ontario has evolved in a variety of ways since the late nineteenth century. The concept that citizens participate to some extent with elected municipal officials and administrators in decision-making or program implementation has become firmly entrenched. Initially, the main thrust was political. A tax-supported free library was established by local referendum and its board of management was appointed by school trustees and municipal councillors. In theory the library trustees were broadly representative of their community, and the power vested in the board itself was politically significant: it controlled all aspects of policy-making, planning, raising funds, budgeting, personnel management, and so on.

This participatory model served the library community for a few decades before 1914. It satisfied the general liberal democratic consensus that municipal government was an educational process, the radical position that demanded participation as a right, and the conservative preference for non-elective offices by which prominent persons could exercise some social control. With the advent of scientific management and the growth of the library profession, political/administrative functions were shared to a greater degree. During this period, the model of citizen participation was reshaped and internalized. In larger urban centers “Friends of the Library” support groups were mobilized with some success after the beginning of the Depression. In rural villages and townships, where it was not feasible to establish public libraries, voluntary organizations such as women's institutes were encouraged to incorporate as Association Libraries to provide limited services as a substitute for municipal leadership.

When local government reforms commenced in the 1960s, important changes challenged traditional library governance. Local special purpose bodies were believed to fragment effective planning by municipal councils. Trustees, especially those appointed by greatly enlarged school boards, were held to be

unaccountable to the local electorate. In larger regional governments the inherent community-based representative nature of boards was dismissed. In this environment genuine non-elective contributions to the political process became a low priority. Incorporating citizens in government planning by using technical needs assessments or performance evaluations was more prevalent. Feedback, not decision-making, was the rationale for citizen involvement.

Viewed in this context John Marshall's *Citizen Participation in Library Decision-Making* is an essential anthology documenting the unprecedented transformation that occurred in the Toronto Public Library between 1974 and 1981. Fifteen contributors, who were either directly involved or close observers, recount their experiences in detail and give various opinions about the value of citizen participation. The editor does a fine job of unifying these disparate views by adding six chapters that explain events and analyse trends. Generally, Marshall and his contributors found participation a worthwhile activity with significant consequences for libraries.

The introductory chapters by James T. Lemon and Michael Goldrick acquaint the reader with the political context of the urban reform movement at Toronto City Hall and the neighbourhood citizen power groups that came into prominence in the early 1970s. As Marshall points out, at this stage the library board and administration were ill-prepared to accommodate any reformers — one participant, Alderman Dorothy Thomas, described the board as “dominated by north Toronto professionals.” But by 1975 reform-minded trustees were in a majority, and dramatic change was under way.

James Lorimer and others describe the entire affair as a turnaround. Over a period of five years TPL was transformed from a closed to an open system, from a hierarchical to a reasonably decentralized structure. Citizen interest in newly formed committees and public input at meetings reordered library priorities at both the system and neighbourhood levels. The library's administrative practice was reorganized and a staff

union created. The concept of district libraries was abandoned; in its place renovated or newly constructed community branches appeared. Inequalities in service were identified and long-range plans set in motion to equalize resources. Library collection policies were reassessed to place greater emphasis on multilingual, Canadian and popular (as opposed to quality) items. By the end of this period, citizens' advisory committees became a standard feature at TPL.

Throughout this process management was in a state of flux. So too were old-guard trustees and "Friends" groups that supported the traditional political/administrative structure which had evolved. Lorimer concludes that library managers and trustees need to reassess their basic rationale for providing service — that is, they must involve the public to relate collection policies and services to enlarge the community base. Meyer Brownstone stated that TPL's trials and tribulations show that one advantage of an appointed library board is its flexibility *vis-à-vis* "the more rigid, political, bureaucratic character of the municipal government with its general centralizing tendencies and its pseudo participation."

Marshall agrees with their analyzes and suggests one way to encourage more responsiveness in libraries is to foster the concept of active advisory committees. Another proposal is to promote administrative commitment to include staff and public in planning and evaluation of services, a parallel structure of decentralized decision-making at the neighborhood (community) and branch (system) levels. Naturally, the major institutional hurdle is to set in place this scheme and keep it operating, Marshall advises the employment of area-based library community organizers to coordinate this activity.

There are a few lessons to be drawn from the Toronto experience. A decade ago, a comprehensive survey by Jane Robbins, *Citizen Participation and Public Library Policy*, found that participation was the exception rather than the rule. Since 1975 library administrators and trustees in larger urban centers have gradually moved toward involving the community in more

significant ways by using committees, meetings or needs assessments. However, the Toronto experience remains unique for the degree of change introduced in institutional goals and objectives, organization, staffing and interface with the public. The drawbacks of participation — the costs in terms of expected money, energy, staff time and so on — are not examined by Marshall at length. In rural libraries where the heritage of voluntarism lives on and the theory of trustee representativeness remains plausible, there is some skepticism about the necessity to adopt participatory methods. What is clear today is that the traditional trustee/administrator monopoly in policy and management is in transition. New forms of citizen participation, use of marketing approaches, and program evaluation techniques offer hope for more responsive and accessible public libraries.

Lome Bruce, McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph

Saturday, April 13, 2024

One Place to Look; The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan (1990)

One Place to Look; The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan.

Prepared by the Ontario Public Library Strategic Planning Group. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, 1990. 68 p., illus. Also published in French with title: *Une voie d'accès à l'information.*

YESTERDAY,

you could find much of what you wanted at the library. We built collections, archives, files and we tried to catalogue and index them so that we could find it for you....if we had it. Yesterday's technology was storage.

TODAY,

you can look for what you want in other libraries as well. We've built interlibrary loan systems, telex, telephone and computer networks, and we can get it for you next week. Today's technology is retrieval and communications, and we do it with silicon and electrons.

TOMORROW,

you'll be able to find it for yourself, and have it in your hand as you leave the library, or as you search from your home or office.

We'll still:

store with lasers and on paper;
retrieve with machine-assisted searches;
communicate via screens, satellite and most importantly,
face-to-face.

And we'll package.

Tomorrow's library will package information of all kinds in all formats and deliver it on time, whenever you need it. Our technology will improve our ability to do this, to help us bring you the world of information.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY - ONE PLACE TO LOOK

Soon after the passage of the seminal Public Libraries Act in 1985 by the Progressive Conservative government in Ontario, provincial library planners in the Ontario Library Association (OLA) began focusing on information policy and strategic planning in 1987. The strategic plans which the newly formed provincially-funded Ontario Library Service (OLS) areas began

after 1989 were limited in scope, and, as a result, librarians and trustees from municipalities, the OLA, and professional groups began to concentrate on all of Ontario. An agreed upon strategic vision for all types of libraries would further cooperative work and develop consistency and direction that was absent in legislative library provisions. After the Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC) agreed to finance a province-wide plan through the OLA, the public library community actively began the difficult task of finding common ground. The previous 1982 extensive process and report by Peter Bassnett in the early 1980s, *Ontario Public Libraries: The Provincial Role in a Triad of Responsibilities*, had struggled to find consensus and dealt with a simpler technological environment. There now was a new opportunity at the outset of a new decade when the term ‘electronic library’ was gaining increasing parlance.

By the start of the 1990s, public-sector strategic planning meant the development of a mission statement, a more complete analysis of the factors influencing library service, specific recommendations about goals, long-term objectives to achieve these goals, and recommendations for implementing the new vision. An inclusive method could lead to agreement about principal services and structures. By mid-1988, a small planning group chaired by Elizabeth Hoffman, a founding member of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudsmen and a Toronto Public Library trustee, came together to plot Ontario’s first strategic plan for library service. For many years, librarians and trustees had looked to briefs, regulations, and legislative provisions to define the library’s role and functions. Now, legislative provisions were not to be the outcome. Now, planners had to submit convincing recommendations to many partners and hope for a successful implementation process on the part of many libraries across the province—large or small!

An Ontario Public Library Strategic Planning Group (SPG) began its process in March 1988, forming teams to prepare

reports, such as technology, and developing a mission statement that later became a Statement of Purpose. Elizabeth Cummings for the Libraries and Community Information Branch (LCIB) and Margaret Andrewes for the OLA maintained a communication plan and helped coordinate the work of the SPG to support its deliberations. For months, the SPG attended meetings to outline the process and collate information on areas of fundamental interest, such as service to northern Ontario, equity of access, education for staff, technology, or funding. The task groups studied and analyzed major issues, and by summer 1990, the SPG was ready to finalize its drafts after receiving more than two hundred briefs and presentations at local public hearings. A final document, *One Place to Look*, was released in time for the November 1990 OLA Toronto conference. At this convention, there was some optimism about the organization's strategic document. So, plans were commenced to form a consensus and implement as many SPG recommendations as possible. All stakeholders, i.e., the provincial government, municipal councils, library boards, and library users, needed to be proactive in developing their strategy for implementing *One Place to Look* in their community.

One Place to Look was a progressive vision that sought to situate libraries on “the crest of the information wave” that was beginning to sweep the globe. In 1989, the National Science Foundation’s NSFNET in the United States had gone online, and in the following year, Tim Berners-Lee, a scientist at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, unveiled the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). In 1991, CERN introduced the World Wide Web and the number of websites began to proliferate. The development of Netscape Navigator, Yahoo!, and a Microsoft browser for Windows 95 quickly followed. The ‘electronic library’ would soon give way to the ‘digital library.’

Nevertheless, several themes in *One Place to Look* were

familiar. The mantra of “access to the right information at the right time” harked back to an earlier 20th-century motto about books: “the right book for the right reader.” The cornerstones for progress would be:

(1) equitable access to information; (2) helping people find the right information; (3) provision of materials for pleasure and relaxation; (4) free access to resources; and (5) the library as a lifelong educational agency (p. 13). Four goals were to achieve these societal purposes, each with basic objectives and several recommendations. It was a plan with a purpose, ways and means to get there, and a collaborative approach that would give all participants a common purpose and direction. Its four fundamental goals were:

1. Every Ontarian will have access to the information resources within the province through an integrated system of partnerships among all types of information providers;
2. Every Ontarian will receive public library service that is accurate, timely, and responsive to individual and community needs;
3. Every Ontarian will receive public library service that meets recognized levels of excellence from trained and service-oriented staff governed by responsible trustees;
4. Every Ontarian will have access to the resources and services of all public libraries without barriers or charges.

Detailed objectives were the key to the entire strategic planning process because they linked goals with outcomes. There were twenty objectives, which were grouped around several major concerns:

- development of an information policy and strategy for Ontario;
- an integrated, province-wide public library information network;
- promotion of effective units of service;
- effective, electronic access to all collections in the province-wide network;

- a program to preserve printed and electronic information;
- programs to encourage innovation and removal of barriers to service;
- an education program for trustees to provide leadership;
- development of staff expertise;
- removal of barriers to service due to “race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or handicap;”
- equity of access to service for all Ontarians, regardless of geography;
- public library service and access to the provincial network for all Ontarians without charge;
- funding to support the integrated, province-wide public library information network.

One Place to Look was an inspired visionary document. At a time when a 1989 Gallup Canada Survey revealed that only 43% of the people it interviewed were aware that they could phone the public library for information, the SPG was saying that people would be able to access materials in their libraries from the comfort of their homes. For many people, the futuristic vision was difficult to square with current conditions.

Unfortunately, the strategic plan was rolled out just as North America entered a major recession that ravaged Ontario between 1990–92. Government revenue at all levels shrank; consequently, hard choices were made, and cutback management became more important. Although the MCC announced in early 1991 that its funding for libraries would not be cut and that money for Indian Bands and libraries would be increased, government per capital library revenue peaked in 1992 and remained flat for another three years. At the same time, some library services, such as reference and circulation, continued to grow.

Financial considerations came to the fore because revenue was stagnant; thus, library boards and CEOs seriously investigated

other sources, such as budget trimming and user fees.

Deliberations on strategic planning were also lessened by the rapid development of the Information Highway and the need for libraries to develop Internet services and expend more on technological considerations. *One Place to Look* required two critical structures for successful implementation: first, a central provincial office to coordinate and manage an integrated provincial network; second, a Strategic Planning Council with representation from all library organizations to advise and recommend policy to the coordinating body based on an agreement in the broader community. However, provincial governments for decades had been unenthusiastic about establishing a central coordinating body to provide province-wide administration for library services. The two 1990s provincial OLS agencies (South and North) were a means, not formal agencies, to carry out liaison, coordination, and advisory services across the province. Generally, the period 1991–95 was punctuated by cabinet shuffles and ministry realignments; consequently, there were few opportunities to prioritize libraries or expand the Libraries and Community Information Branch's (LCIB) role. From its reorganization in the late 1970s, the LCIB (especially under Wil Vanderelst) had actively promoted coordination among Ontario library boards and had worked to improve their efficiency. In 1993, the LCIB did publish a short statement, *One Place to Look: Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan, 1990: 3 Years Later*, without much fanfare. As well, work towards formation of Network 2000, an effort to connect Ontarians to the global information highway through their public libraries, had commenced. However, in 1995, the LCIB was reformed into a new Ministry and its functions merged with a new, broader-focused Cultural Partnerships Branch.

For strategic planners, the recession, the lack of government continuity, plus the absence of a major coordinating body at the provincial level were major impediments. One promising development was the creation of an Ontario Public Libraries

Strategic Directions Council (SDC) in 1992 that began working on marketing, telecommunications, and revision of the strategic plan. This group consisted of representatives from all library sectors: all public libraries; the OLS and LCIB; Metro Toronto Library; and the OLA. As a practical consideration, additional project money for a second-generation network, INFO, the Information Network for Ontario, was put into place in 1992 by the MCC to create a provincial database for distribution on cd-roms. INFO could then connect with a regional high-speed network, ONet, to become part of a larger publicly accessible enterprise. Later, in February 1996, the SDC released a short discussion paper: *A Call to Action: Specific Initiatives to Advance Public Library Development in Ontario*, but it failed to generate sufficient attention during the ‘Common Sense Revolution’ unleashed by the Progressive Conservative government.

During this period, the OLA emerged as the biggest booster of library strategic planning. At OLA’s 1991 conference, a new division, the Ontario Library and Information Technology Association (OLITA), was created to address the impact of the burgeoning Information Society. In May 1992, OLA published *A Proposal for an Information Policy for Ontario* which updated a report from the 1989 exercise leading to *One Place to Look*. To interest small libraries under 10,000 in strategic planning, OLA’s conferences in 1991 and 1992 featured “The Hometown Library” mini-conference sessions for trustees and staff. To raise information awareness and sustain *One Place to Look*, OLITA began to promote interdisciplinary exchanges, research, standards, monitoring of new technologies, and development of models for library systems and networks. In 1992, it joined with the ALA to sponsor a series of meetings on international technology, “Ten Days to 2000,” which heightened consciousness about networking, the Information Highway or the Internet. In the following year, 1993, OLA formed the Coalition for Public Information with representatives outside libraries as a

voice for public participation in the emerging telecommunications-information field. Partnerships like the Coalition represented one of the objectives the Strategic Planning Group had recommended to broaden the action base on important issues. Thus, on some fronts, the strategic planning process was progressing despite challenging economic conditions.

Nonetheless, the effects of the recession hampered OLA's ability to promote libraries at a crucial time. Public sector realignments exposed libraries and librarianship to the rationalization of work and technological expertise in an increasingly unionized workplace and magnified the weaker form of tiered library governance (province-municipality-board) and multiple professional and trustee associations. For a time, OLA was coping with declining membership and finances. Staffing levels for librarians and technicians had moderated after the Bassnett Report in the early 1980s, and there was little flexibility in personnel budgets. *One Place to Look* continued to be a rallying cry into the early 2000s. Many of its objectives were a work in progress for many years: improved guidelines for smaller libraries, certification programs and better training for staffing, more effective electronic access, a program to preserve printed and born-digital information, and other worthy activities. For the most part, the strategic plan was eventually a successful endeavour and a model for future library planners. References to it still appear in library publications, and the catchy phrase, 'One Place to Look,' continues to reverberate in library language, in many ways supplanting older library mottos that emphasized reading and books.

One Place to Look has been digitized and is available for viewing on the [Internet Archive](#).

My earlier 2022 blog on the [Bassnett Report](#) is also available for viewing.

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Raymond Tanghe on Québec libraries and librarianship, 1952–1962

Pour un système cohérent de bibliothèques au Canada français
by Raymond Tanghe. Montréal: Fides, 1952, 38 p.

Le bibliothéciat by Raymond Tanghe. Montréal: Fides, 1962.
117 p.



Raymond Tanghe (portrait at left, c.1962) was born in France in 1898 and came to Canada in 1920 after serving in the French army during the First World War. He was an academic by choice and earned a PhD at the Université de Montréal in 1928. His professional writings were in human and economic geography, especially urban planning, at the l'École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Montréal in the 1930s. He

became a professor and later Director of the central library of the Université de Montréal from 1942 to 1953. He had a flare for popular and scholarly writing and worked with Radio-Canada during the Second World War. Tanghe worked to centralize holdings at the University and expressed his opinion that it would benefit faculty and students at the Quebec Library Association meeting in 1945. In 1948, he became President of the Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française (ACBLF) for two terms before he moved to Ottawa in

1953 to become the Assistant National Librarian at the National Library of Canada.

In this more expansive role in Ottawa, he became better acquainted with Canadian librarianship and the close relationship many librarians had with bibliographic work during the 1950s. He served as President of the Bibliographical Society of Canada from 1958 to 1960. Under his editorship, the *Bibliography of Canadian Bibliographies* was published in 1960 with 1665 entries, almost half authored by library school students in two major centres, Montreal and Toronto. Tanghe began his third career after retiring from the National Library in 1963 to return to France by taking up the direction of the Maison des étudiants canadiens à Paris, where he mentored students in a congenial learning environment until his retirement in 1968. He died in Montreal in 1969 after a short illness.

Raymond Tanghe did not possess formal training in librarianship. Like many of his male predecessors in Canada, he was an academic, a man of literary tastes who learned about the operation of libraries from administrative experience and personal observation of an emerging profession. In the course of a decade, he penned three valuable library works: one to propose a plan for a province-wide public library system, one to describe and publicize the library profession, and one to outline the history of a professional French-speaking library school in Montreal. In many ways, Tanghe's contributions to Canadian librarianship represent the nationalist sentiment and growth of secularism in Quebec during the 1950s and early 1960s. The fifteen years before the beginning of the 'Quiet Revolution' in 1960 was an evolutionary time to a more liberal, worldly-minded society in which the role of the Catholic Church was reduced. In 1945, Quebec society was deeply influenced by the Church; for example, parish libraries substituted as public libraries in most parts of the province, and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* continued as an authoritative catalogue to censor reading authors such as Émile Zola or Jean-Paul Sartre. Changes came gradually:

in 1948, Quebec adopted its provincial flag, the Fleurdelisé; in 1952, Radio-Canada began television broadcasting from Montreal, which accentuated Quebec's political, cultural, and social affairs; and in 1956, the Tremblay Commission called for greater provincial government control of social and financial affairs. Influenced by this report, Quebec eventually adopted its first general public libraries act in December 1959.

Tanghe's major publication in 1952 by the firm Fides, *Pour un système cohérent de bibliothèques au Canada français*, first appeared as three articles in the 1951 issues of the journal Lectures. His pamphlet represented a blend of current and retrospective library views. The traditional concept of library service, parish libraries, had existed since the 19th century in Quebec communities, embodying a Catholic humanism that emphasized moral and spiritual principles. By 1950, mid-century modernist library thought invoked the concept of systematic operations, professionalism, and the more secular philosophy of public service. Generally, Tanghe was sympathetic to the traditional course but recognized libraries as basic public sector institutions. His introduction emphasized the need for libraries to educate both rural and urban workers. He believed it was important to elevate people's reading to counter the harmful influence of cinemas or radio by enriching their intellectual, moral, and spiritual lives. As a primary starting point, Tanghe took up the cause of the brief 'Manifesto' published first in 1944 and again in 1947 by l'École de bibliothécaires (formed in Montreal in 1937) and supported by the Quebec library community he was most closely associated with, the ACBLE. This wartime statement expressed the idea that public libraries were essentially an educational responsibility of the province and its municipalities, although religious considerations, Catholic and Protestant, remained vital elements. The statement proposed that the Catholic Committee of Public Education organize a Provincial Office of Libraries, overseeing urban municipal library commissions and regional library councils in rural areas,

responsible for one or more counties or a regional church diocese. Establishing a provincial body in conjunction with the formation of municipal and rural authorities would facilitate the promotion of legislation, surveys, policies, distribution of grants, and operation of libraries.

Tanghe elaborated on this basic scheme in more detail. He proposed provincial library legislation (p. 16) to:

- (a) to authorize municipalities to establish and maintain libraries with municipal revenues after taxpayers first presented a petition to municipal councils to establish a library;
- (b) to create a Library Service (“Service de bibliothèques”) within the Department of Public Education to be responsible for the administration of general assistance to public libraries, free of charge. A Board of Management (“Bureau de direction”) would head the Service and be admitted to sit on the Roman Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction. The delivery of services would be the responsibility of larger ‘provincial libraries’ (such as the renowned Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice in Montreal), a Central agency (to be organized), and local libraries used by the public in municipalities and parishes. The provincial libraries (p. 19–21) had a dual responsibility to serve the public directly and foster cooperative efforts with other libraries.

The formation of a central establishment (“Centrale”) was the heart of Tanghe’s *système cohérent* (p. 21–22). It was an efficient system for selecting, purchasing, binding, cataloguing, and distributing books by well-trained specialists. As well, it was charged with sending books in travelling libraries to municipal or parish libraries and book-impoorerish rural areas (p. 24–26). At the head of the system, the Library Service needed competent personnel at five different levels (p. 29–31): administrators, ‘inspecteurs-propagandistes’ (people skilled in public relations and able to provide library advice), librarians, technicians, and warehouse workers. Interestingly, Tanghe recommended that

technicians possess a diploma in library science to carry out clerical tasks such as recording loans. Librarians required good judgement and a broad culture for good book selection (an elitist view held by the author), classify resources, and acquire an in-depth knowledge of library resources and sources of bibliographic information. Librarian candidates (Tanghe seems to assume these came from the École de Bibliothécaires) needed to take an introductory course at the end of their studies in one of the provincial libraries.

In a nod to the practical reality of everyday life in Quebec, Tanghe accepted the continuation of parish libraries as ‘public libraries’ (p. 31–35) for mostly rural Catholic, French-speaking Canadians, hardly an innovative program even by 1950s conservative standards. In fact, a more influential contemporary, Edmond Desrochers, published a study, *Le rôle social des bibliothèques publiques* in 1952 which concluded that parish libraries should be replaced by municipal public libraries. These were different perspectives because Tanghe perceived Quebec’s parish system as a cohesive centre of life fostering solidarity in many communities. From his academic planning viewpoint, social collectivism was a primary goal which libraries could contribute to within the parishes (p. 13): “Dans la province de Québec, la paroisse est une collectivité socialement organisée, qui a un centre de ralliement, qui possède ou peut fonder des œuvres adaptées au groupe humain qui la compose.” Recognizing that many parishes were underfunded and could not form working libraries, he recommended small collections of about 1,000 volumes and provincial subsidies for parish libraries, which could sustain and invigorate their activities; for example, Tanghe calculated for \$60,000/year about 500 parishes could be supplied with rotating travelling book collections on a monthly basis. But, in fact, most existing parish libraries held only meagre collections and were poorly administered, as the Tremblay Commission discovered a few years later in 1956. Chaired by Justice Thomas Tremblay, this report called for

further study and the passage of public library legislation to form the basis of future growth.

Even with approval from Catholic authorities (Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger authored an introduction to the pamphlet), Tanghe's systematic plan that included parishes did not attract much attention at a political level because many officials recognized the era of parish libraries was passing as society became more secular and the power of the Church lessened, and the role government increased. This transition is illustrated by the National Film Board 1959 production, *Il faut qu'une bibliothèque soit ouverte ou fermée*, which depicts the efforts of the townspeople of Montmagny to create a municipal public library. However, the ideas of a central commission, municipal libraries, and regional entities—a common North American trend by this time—as operatives of library services did foreshadow future directions. In 1959, the Quebec Legislature adopted a law for public libraries which contained three important clauses:

- (a) the creation of a Quebec Library Commission to investigate problems relating to the establishment, maintenance and development of public libraries;
- (b) the formation of a Quebec Library Service headed by a director of public libraries who can maintain staffing to carry out its proper functioning;
- (c) the establishment of a budget line of \$200,000 for the fiscal year 1960-61 to cover the cost of implementing the new law.

This law was a modest, progressive step. The many details and mechanics that Tanghe laboured to provide in his pamphlet were not dusted off for action, which was the fate of many reports. However, his underlying confidence that there was a French culture and identity for Quebec libraries to foster and maintain set his program apart from other contemporary Canadian library 1950s reports in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick. This belief was a lasting legacy in its own right.

Watch the 26 minute NFB film directed by Raymond Garceau in 1959, [*Il faut qu'une bibliothèque soit ouverte ou fermée*](#), which illustrates the changing views on public library service in the small town of Montmagny.

* * * * *

Towards the end of his twenty-year library career, Tanghe published a work that revealed the nature of his views on librarianship after a decade at the National Library in Ottawa. In ***Le bibliothéciat***, a short book—really an essay—of just over 100 pages that appeared in 1962 (reprinted in 1964), he outlined the major aspects of librarianship he had observed over almost two decades. This French language book was the first publication of its kind in Canada; indeed, it reflected a consensus of Canadian librarianship in mid-century. For the most part, Canadian trained professional librarians relied on publications from the American Library Association. Thus, Tanghe was breaking new ground, although his primary aim was to reach students, especially those in Quebec interested in choosing librarianship as a career, his own scholarly way of mentoring. In his introduction, he declared that he would primarily discuss the qualities and training required to be a librarian and offer his views on the true nature of librarianship (p. 7) instead of publishing a textbook. Then, he makes his case for librarianship in eight chapters: the general field, required skills and qualities, basic training, professional development, the actual work, administrators, salaries and working conditions, and a brief proposal for a collective services project for Quebec.

In his survey of the field in Canada, Tanghe raised some interesting points. He noted the shortage of librarian professionals to fill positions (a problem that existed throughout the 1950s) and made three observations (p. 16) that characterized librarianship at the time:

- 1) there was an overall lack of librarians in relation to the

population served by all types of libraries; 2) professional librarians only accounted for a third of the total staff in public libraries; 3) positions were filled predominately by women. Tanghe felt administrators were addressing the persistent shortage by having library assistants assume more duties. In a period when the demarcation between clerical routines and professional duties in North American libraries was known to be ambiguous, the author made his position clear for larger libraries (p. 18–19):

Library assistant duties: 1) short cataloguing, 2) classification of files, 3) circulation and loans, 4) checking-in periodicals, 5) controlling receipts, 6) inventorying.

Librarian duties: 1) directing library assistants, 2) detailed cataloguing, 3) classification, 4) reviewing magazines, 5) preparing bibliographies, 6) reference and orientation services, 7) acquisitions, subscriptions, exchanges, and 8) cooperating with other libraries.

Finally, he asserted that the traditional stereotypes associated with librarianship, often attributed unfairly to women, were no longer applicable. Librarianship now was more dynamic with challenging positions requiring more intelligence, initiative, and imagination on the part of young women and men interested in collaborative work in the humanities and sciences. However, despite this progressive view shared by most in the field, Tanghe restated the dated arguments that women were mostly responsible for lower salaries and that men were often candidates for administrative positions because women frequently left the profession for marriage (p. 20).

In discussing librarian characteristics and necessary skill sets, Tanghe declared libraries are service organizations, a generally accepted attribute by mid-century. Thus, a primary personal quality is *serviabilité*, the need to provide helpful assistance—service with a smile and an outgoing personality. The ability to approach work methodologically and follow directions were two

more essential personal traits. Respect (perhaps love) for books was an obvious aspect of daily work given the state of collections in the 1960s. Intellectual curiosity and the need to be adaptable were also requisite personal attributes for success. With the idea of *la tolérance*, the ability to be fair, understanding, and well-balanced, Tanghe broached the subject of library neutrality and censorship at a time when societal changes were sweeping North America. He concluded that judgement about resources and a person's right to read should be considered within the context of morality and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Notably, he was writing shortly before Canadian courts began ruling more liberally concerning the censorship of books and before the Catholic Church ended the authority of the Index in 1966. Finally, the author suggested that a stable, career-driven curve best served the individual librarian, especially from the standpoint of employers. One noticeable characteristic that appeared in the contemporary library literature that Tanghe ignored was the capacity for leadership, although he dealt with the practice of administration in a separate chapter. Otherwise, his six attributes were all conventional when *Le bibliothéciat* was published in 1962. But, with the passage of time, we know employers now look to different workplace requirements that situate his observations in a historical period of mid-century modernism which libraries have passed through.

Similarly, the book's focus on basic training for semi-professionals and professionals now seems dated, although it was considered standard when he was writing. Possession of a degree before entering library school was a regular practice by 1960. He provides background on two French-language library schools in Montreal and Ottawa which were beginning to attempt to secure accreditation from the American Library Association (ALA). Today, the 1951 ALA requirements seem dated, but at the time they were not easily achieved in a Canadian context:

- 1) a library school must be an integral part of a recognized

university;

2) a school must have secure financial funding, adequate premises and equipment;

3) a school must have a sufficiently large faculty with authority and jurisdiction to establish and conduct its programs.

It would be many years before the University of Montreal or Ottawa achieved accreditation, but their older histories are interesting in their own right due to their French-language emphasis. Also, Tanghe went into some detail about the need for professional development after entry into the workplace. He suggested that additional education and broader interest in the human sciences, namely anthropology, and social, economic and political science, would benefit many. He raised the issue of librarianship as a profession at some length (p. 57–61), citing the work of Father Jacques Lazure (University of Ottawa), a sociologist who had spoken to a conference of Quebec librarians in 1961. Lazure (and many others) stated librarianship was not yet a profession. Yet, Tange felt that professional status, especially the adoption of its ideals and the feeling of group solidarity, eventually could be attained. Librarians needed to be proactive and recognize that service was the essential feature of librarianship and required requisite collective professionalism. He pointed to the Quebec library group, *L'Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française*, as an organizing force in this direction (p. 63).

A lengthy chapter (p. 67–91) on library work is now mainly of historical interest. Mid-century modernization in acquisitions work, cataloguing and classification of books, binding and other routine techniques were technical aspects that involved a large portion of staffing. Departmental responsibilities for public services involved reference, research, circulation of books, reader orientation, bookmobiles, and audio-visual service. Of more interest is Tanghe's brief account of 'information science' or 'documentation' as it was better known at the time. He mentions the work of Mortimer Taube who developed coordinate

indexing in the 1950s and wrote about information storage and retrieval. Tanghe believed scientific libraries were being established more frequently, and their newer concepts of library work would expand traditional librarianship (p. 83). Of course, the author noted the excellent work of the National Library, especially its union catalogue and close working relationship with the Public Archives of Canada.

A chapter on the role of administrators reveals a more personal approach by the author, who had worked as Assistant National Librarian for a decade. Tanghe knew it was a practical matter for aspiring librarians to recognize administrative ability and tasks to advance their careers. His ideas generally followed the classic public sector organizational theory, POSDCORB, developed in the 1930s. This management acronym stood for Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-Ordinating, Reporting and Budgeting. By applying these general tenets, Tanghe describes what he considered to be the main functions of management: (1) the recruitment of new staff and personnel direction, promotion, and management; (2) budgeting and financial control; (3) the organization of equipment, furnishings, and buildings; (4) the development of collections; (5) establishing and maintaining library policies and regulations; (8) and public relations. His mention of the Farmington Plan, a cooperative effort to acquire and store foreign language materials for American libraries, is of historical interest because it set a pattern for subsequent cooperative collection development programs before it ended in 1972.

Two brief chapters follow. One was on salaries and working conditions circa 1960, and the other was entitled Collective Services Project for Quebec. It offers some of his prescriptions for library development in his home province. Leading by example was a central point in Tanghe's mind: in *Le bibliothéciat* he was passing the torch to a new generation of

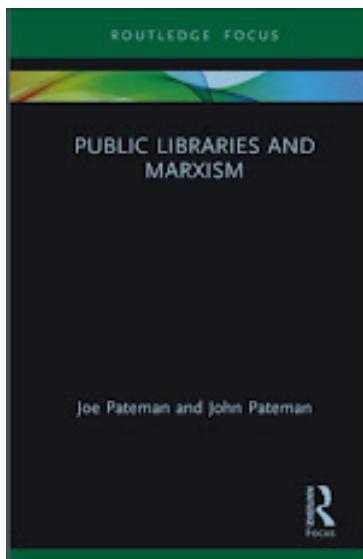
leaders at an opportune point in time. The École de bibliothéconomie of the Université de Montréal had just been founded in 1961; afterwards, more university-trained librarians began to adopt a scientific approach to their profession, and, in 1969, they formed the Corporation of Professional Librarians of Québec. Tanghe's publication followed in the footsteps of *Library Science for Canadians* published in 1936 but his focus was upon the nature and working conditions of the profession, not the emerging academic field. These two publications were significant landmarks in the literature of Canadian librarianship before the rapid growth of the 1960s.

[My earlier post on *Library Science for Canadians*](#), composed by two University of Western Ontario librarians, Beatrice Welling and Catherine Campbell, appeared in 2016.

Monday, February 26, 2024

Public Libraries and Marxism by Joe and John Pateman (2021)

Public Libraries and Marxism by Joe Pateman and John Pateman. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. 119 p., indexed.



Public libraries offer an amazing range of information and services in Western society, but to what end? Library organizations and librarians mainly focus on the functional aspects of library services and professional activity while ignoring power relationships and the institutional framework of libraries within society. ***Public Libraries and Marxism*** analyzes the public library from a Marxist perspective by challenging our conventional liberal-democratic views that focus mostly on delivering services while ignoring its hegemonic basis of authority. John Pateman has extensive administrative experience. He headed libraries in the UK before he came to Canada in 2012

to be the CEO of Thunder Bay Public Library in Ontario. He has written articles and books with a Marxist viewpoint, such as *Public Libraries and Social Justice* (2010) and *Developing Community Led Public Libraries* (2013). Joe Pateman is a professor of politics at York University in Toronto, Ontario, and his main research interest concerns the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. Together, they have crafted a valuable introductory handbook for those interested in a Leninist version of Marxism and public librarianship. As well, each chapter has a useful bibliography that readers can pursue to navigate the complexities of Marxism.

The Patemans' argument unfolds in six chapters — (1) Introduction (2) The Marxist Interpretation of the Public Library (3) V. I. Lenin and Soviet Socialist Public Library System (4) Kim Il-Sung and Socialist Public Libraries in North Korea (5) The Vanguard Library (6) Conclusion. The authors dedicated this book to V.I. Lenin with a following quote from the leading Marxist-Leninist historian of the 1920s, Mikhail Pokrovskii, concerning the importance of libraries. Pokrovskii is quoted from time to time but there is no mention that he suffered the fate of many Russian intellectuals—his work was quickly discredited and his historical school eclipsed during the 1930s then rehabilitated to some extent after Stalin's death.

The Introduction provides the essential features of Marxist-Leninist ideology, the interpretation of Marxist thought developed by Vladimir Lenin that emerged from Russia at the beginning of the 20th-century. Some readers may be familiar with the terminology of (a) dialectical materialism and its three laws; (b) the base and superstructure of historical materialism; (c) the hierarchical order of class analysis; (d) the creation of a classless, stateless society under scientific communism; and (e) the revolutionary leadership of Vanguardism. This exposition has the quality of brevity and clarity; however, I find the claim that Marxism is a scientific account of social change to be highly problematic. For me, Marxism is essentially a speculative philosophy because of its well-known imprecision (it can lead to many deductions or variants, yet no critical examination can

entirely refute it) and its reliance on patterns, purpose, and meaning in history which the vast majority of historians reject because they see no purpose or goal in history. Further, Marxism-Leninism is less a philosophy and more a political ideology that calls for the creation of a Communist state; it is action oriented and analytic thought is mostly a handmaiden. The authors conclude this chapter by discussing other theoretical approaches used in library and information studies (LIS), such as Western Marxism, which they firmly repudiate likely because it is less focused on class or political struggles and more on cultural-social development, philosophy, or art.

Chapter 2 focuses on the library and librarians as historical entities. From the typical Marxist model of the forms of society, there are ancient, feudal, capitalist or bourgeois (Traditional Library), socialist (Community-Led), and communist (Needs-Based) public libraries. Library professionals emerged during the era of capitalism, even in socialist nations, but eventually, in a communist society, the previously exploited working classes will manage public libraries. At the centre of this argument are the teachings of Karl Marx, who introduced the concept that human society consisted of two parts: the base (the economic substructure that comprises the forces of production which provide the necessities of life and give rise to the relations of production, that is relations between people) and superstructure (the political, legal, religious, and cultural institutions of society). Marxists hold that productive forces are fundamental and determine the superstructure; however, some Marxist theorists (e.g., especially the Frankfurt School) postulate that the superstructure is of more interest: it may gain some autonomy and, on occasion, influence the base. Applied to public libraries as part of the superstructure, this generally means that the economic base ultimately shapes the library's societal goals and objectives, its policies and procedures, as well as its staffing and services.

Because Marx and his followers viewed human history as a long-term class struggle, the public library, in its various incarnations in capitalist societies, evolved as an instrument of the power of

the ruling bourgeoisie to control the working-class proletariat which comprised the majority of people in most countries: “the public library, as a cultural institution, functions in order to stabilise the economic base and, by extension, the rule of the property-owning class.” (p.29) As part of the authors’ thesis, the ruling elites and acquiescent petite-bourgeois librarians mostly excluded and ignored the voices of the unserved, disadvantaged and minorities. This is consistent with the capitalist idea that the individual and competitive self-interest are the central ingredients in society.

Although the modern public library in Western capitalist countries is theoretically supposed to serve everyone in society, in reality the authors observe that its failure to do so is all too evident. The ‘Traditional Library,’ the state-supported public libraries that emerged in the mid-19th century, served the same function as the mechanics’ institutes — they were instruments of social control. Today, the public library as an institution is often widely regarded as a mainstay of democratic values (i.e., liberty, freedom, pluralism, and equality), yet critical scrutiny of its actual history in LIS literature belies this entrenched belief. Consequently, the authors propose transformative ideas to completely rework the practices of public librarianship and the unconscious operation of ‘capitalist’ libraries. The Marxist perspective emphasizes group conflict through class struggle and the eventual success of the proletariat in seizing the means of production. The authors assert, “It is only under communism that truly public libraries can exist.” (p. 26)

Chapter 3 outlines the Leninist model followed by socialist/communist countries in the 20th-century. Because Vladimir Lenin believed that socialist public libraries and librarians could be a leading force in developing the cultural, educational, and technical knowledge of the masses, the Soviet Union created a centralized, state-controlled library service that drew initial praise even in the West. After Lenin’s death, his widow, Nadezhda Krupskaia, a Communist commissar of education, was largely responsible for the direction of library development and better training for librarians. Her writings are

quoted extensively throughout the book. She infused libraries with new ideas about their goals and functions and helped promote a rapid expansion of literacy in the Soviet Union before she was discredited during the dictatorial regime of Stalin. Krupskaia felt that understanding readers, selecting books to suit readers' interests by promoting communist thought, and better organization of resources would improve services. Today, the basic Marxist-Leninist model she helped establish in the Soviet Union continues in socialist countries such as Cuba, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, and North Korea.

Chapter 4 outlines one country's public library system, North Korea. Kim Il-Sung (1912–94), the national Supreme Leader, was mostly responsible for its development. His concept, inspired by *Juche*, was self-reliance in a national context. Public libraries in the Korean state must build upon a revolutionary outlook and the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea focusing on ideology and, more importantly, the authority of the Supreme Leader, a sort of allegiance on steroids. This chapter is quite helpful in explaining the development of public libraries in North Korea, a topic seldom appearing in the Western library literature. North Korean libraries have diverged somewhat from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy but they retain many characteristics of the conventional model.

Chapter 5 discusses the 'Vanguard Library' and its potential in capitalist and socialist societies, especially Cuba. Lenin developed the idea of Vanguardism as a strategy whereby highly motivated, key members of the proletariat formed groups to further the goals of communist ideology. Of course, there are elements of elitism in this approach, a matter which leads back to the issue of social control of the working class and variant Marxist views about how capitalism would falter and collapse. The Vanguard Library leads the evolution of public libraries from one Marxist stage of historical development to the next. As capitalism declines and disappears, under vanguard action the Traditional Library will evolve into the socialist stage of the Community-Led library that better meets the needs of the working class. At some future point, the highest stage of public

library progress will be reached under classless, stateless communist conditions and the Community-Led Library will transition into the Needs-Based Library. This latter incarnation of the public library faithfully serves the entire public without limitations. In the context of Cuba, the Vanguard Library is said to have played a critical role after the 1959 revolution brought Fidel Castro to power. The government established a network of libraries which vitalized the working class and rolled back illiteracy in short order. Vanguardism raises working-class consciousness by educating workers and by creating a ‘new man’ entirely in sync with socialist ideology and motivated by the best principles of class consciousness.

Considering what a Marxist library service would look like in the Western capitalist countries of today, *Public Libraries and Marxism* provides insights that help us understand the revolutionary impact of the potential for transformation in Western public librarianship. The Patemans’ outline why and how Western public libraries can change organizational practices, indeed their culture and mission, to better serve those in need. That is an important Marxist message for librarians to keep in mind as new challenges arise. It is not a utopian vision, but a call to understand our place in history and our communities, to reach unserved minorities and the working class, and to strive to build an authentic public library service that will finally achieve what it claims to do, to serve everyone. However, the vexed issue of who will lead the Vanguard is left open.

Although the writings of Karl Marx form the basis for Marxist-Leninist thought, e.g., the concept that the material conditions of life determine the nature of human consciousness and society, readers should note that many ideas outlined by the two authors feature the ideas of Vladimir Lenin who championed the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat led by a revolutionary vanguard party. Lenin, moving well beyond the usual Marxist doctrine derived from Marx and Friedrich Engles, theorized this action as the political prelude to the establishment of communism. *Public Libraries and Marxism* gives us a view

of how to work toward communist public libraries, but readers must keep in mind there are many variations of Marxism to chose and follow such as Western Marxism or Trotskyism. But for librarians or LIS scholars who may believe in the ultimate triumph of communism, this book can be a useful starting point.

A selection of V.I. Lenin's writings on libraries and contributions by Nadezhda Krupskaia is available at the Internet Archive in a work by Sylva Šimsová, [Lenin, Krupskaia and Libraries](#) (London: Clive Bingley, 1968). Šimsová was a Czech citizen who emigrated to the UK with her family in 1949 and worked as a librarian (Fellow of the Library Association) in London for many years.

Friday, February 02, 2024

Four Library Development Reports in British Columbia, 1945 to 1956

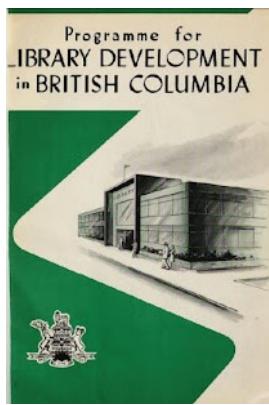
Programme for Library Development in British Columbia.

Victoria, B.C.: Joint Committee on Library Policy, 1945. 36 p.
maps

Programme for Library Development in British Columbia, 1950: Being a Condensation and Revision of the “Programme for Library Development in British Columbia,” 1945. Victoria, B.C: Joint Committee of the British Columbia Library Association and the Public Library Commission, 1950. 10 p.

Survey of Union Libraries in British Columbia. Victoria, B.C.: British Columbia Public Library Commission, 1950. 59 p.

Programme for Library Development in British Columbia, 1956. Victoria: British Columbia Public Library Commission, 1957. 15 p. (cover illustration below)



Over the course of a decade following the Second World War, British Columbia trustees, officials, and librarians sought to improve library services across the province. The provincial Public Library Commission (PLC, est. 1919), in conjunction with financing from the Carnegie Corporation, had issued two previous surveys, one in 1927–28 and another in 1940, that had led to the geographic extension of services through the formation of three union libraries (officially re-titled regional libraries in 1951): Fraser Valley, Okanagan Valley, and Vancouver Island.

However, the wartime and postwar scene began to reveal new issues beyond simple extension: the need to serve a growing population, the need for improvement in the quality of library service, the need to address technological developments, and the need for increased provincial financial support to reach people living in smaller, isolated communities beyond the south-west corner of the province.

Under the able chairmanship of William Kaye Lamb, chief librarian of the University of British Columbia, a 1945 report by a Joint Committee of the BC Library Association and the Public Library Commission sounded the alarm that public library service was inadequate, even in the major cities, Vancouver and Victoria which were housed in decades-old Carnegie libraries. “The pages that follow amply establish the shocking fact that not one community in British Columbia at present enjoys adequate public library service. Furthermore, they show that, for practical purposes, the majority of the people in the Province have no public library service at all.” (p. 1)

The 1945 report unveiled an ambitious program to remedy the situation. The report stated that with expanded services from seven existing libraries, the addition of one new union library district in West Kootenay, and one new Commission branch in the Peace River area at Dawson Creek, about 80% of British Columbians could be served. A revitalized public library map would include:

- three proposed metropolitan districts serviced from Vancouver, New Westminster, and Victoria
- four union systems organized in the Fraser Valley, Okanagan Valley, Vancouver Island, and West Kootenay (proposed)
- two Commission branches at Prince George (already in service in a North-Central district) and Dawson Creek (proposed for the Peace River district)

The remaining population, about 20%, could be better served by converting existing public library associations (e.g., in Kamloops) into free municipal public libraries. The Open Shelf and Travelling Libraries operated by the PLC could supply rural towns, villages, and settlements. To implement its plan, the

report called for improved provincial library aid and legislation to authorize the formation of metropolitan districts, an innovative approach by Canadian standards.

A subsequent brief report by the Joint Committee in 1950 complained that very few bold strokes had happened since 1945. Library service remained inadequate, in part due to low public expectations. Committee members repeated the call for increased general provincial aid (a meagre \$25,000 in 1948–49), especially for the start of grants for city libraries. More importantly, in the same year the PLC issued a *Survey of Union Libraries* under the chairmanship of Edgar Robinson, chief librarian of the city of Vancouver. By 1950, the three regional libraries were serving about one-fifth of the total population of British Columbia, and their progress demonstrated an efficient, cost-effective way to provide library service. Like many cooperative public libraries in Canada, school library service was one of these libraries' strong suits.

Overall, the union libraries report aimed to improve rural services, strengthen existing union libraries, provide the provincial government with information to justify its expenditures and establish a future program for regional development. Various elements of union library operations were studied — governance, book collections, buildings, finances, personnel, bookmobiles, library objectives, standards and public relations. The report reiterated the importance of regional library work but noted the lack of trained personnel, substandard provincial support, and the need for additional regional development:

Gratifying as the record is, there is still obvious need for improvement in almost all phases of regional library work, and it is to this end that the present survey is pointed. Additional rural areas need service, some now being without a vestige of libraries, while existing libraries need additional and substantial financial aid from both local and provincial sources. (forward)

Six years later, in 1956, the third “programme for development” was more optimistic about the services provided by municipal and regional library systems:

The number of municipal public libraries has doubled, and five of the present ten have embarked on expansion programmes, including four new buildings. Financial support by municipalities has risen 60 per cent, though it is still well below the minimum required for services expected of a public library. Provincial aid has been extended to municipal libraries and has gradually increased over the five-year period. Three municipal libraries are now operating bookmobile service, and have mechanized their internal procedures.

The three regional libraries have acquired, with Provincial Government assistance, new headquarters buildings, which have helped immeasurably to improve the service. Local support has improved by 50 per cent or more (p. 7)

Generally, the better financed libraries were operating from a position of strength rather than weakness. There was a repeated call for the formation of metropolitan systems around Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster and new regional systems in the Kootenay and Kamloops districts. School libraries were deficient and depended too much on services provided by public libraries. The report emphasized the need to establish a graduate library school at the University of British Columbia.

The series of British Columbia reports of the 1940s and 1950s were unique statements in Canadian library planning. With the growth of the national economy, rising levels of employment, and the improvement in the standard of living, there was also an increased interest in the development of libraries. Cultural and social changes were taking place with the arrival of television and the popularity of sporting events. When the four library reports were published, the encouragement of metropolitan library planning was in its infancy and regional library service was not firmly established in other parts of Canada. British

Columbia trustees and librarians had pioneered library extension work and, coupled with the PLC's intention to publish up-to-date library surveys, they provided straightforward statements for efficient services, better grants, and improved standards.

By the mid-1950s, British Columbia libraries had reached reasonable levels of achievement and gained better provincial support. On a per capita basis, libraries in BC persistently ranked high in Canadian public library service levels. They were spending an overall \$1.28 per capita expenditure compared to the Canadian average of 91 cents in 1957, as the following table summarizes.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics Public Library Receipts and Expenditures per person, 1957

local taxes	prov. grants	total receipts	book exp.	salary exp.	
\$1.04	\$0.19	\$1.28	\$0.23	\$0.83	BC
\$0.71	\$0.14	\$0.92	\$0.15	\$0.54	Canada

The 1940s and 1950s had been marked by slow progress; nonetheless, BC libraries had profited from the repeated efforts of library planners to upgrade service on a provincial scale.

Two earlier Library History Today posts on British Columbia's libraries are at:

[BC public library reports 1927 to 1941](#)

[Two iconic films on the Fraser Valley Library](#)

Friday, January 19, 2024

Library Service in New Brunswick by Peter Grossman (1953)

Library Service in New Brunswick: A Report and Recommendations by Peter Grossman. Fredericton: New Brunswick Department of Education, 1953. 62 p., maps, illus.



For many years in the first part of the 20th century, public library service lagged in the province of New Brunswick; however, in 1951 a provincial Library Association was established with Maurice Boone, the chief librarian of the Legislative Library and formerly librarian of Acadia University, elected as President. The Association pressed government officials to improve

public library services, and in the following year the Department of Education invited Peter Grossman, the Director of Libraries for Nova Scotia, to conduct a survey throughout the province and devise a plan for future library development.

Peter Grossman (above c. 1953) a native British Columbian who had experience in regional libraries in the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island, spent five weeks in the summer of 1952 investigating school, government, and public libraries.

Generally, despite apathy on the part of many officials, he found an overall public desire for improved library services. He noted the frequent attempts of community groups (especially women's groups) to establish library services and a growing recognition of libraries' important role in schools and universities. He flagged the essential need for cooperation for a province-wide library service to develop properly. As well, he identified a need to hire

more professionally trained librarians and publicize library services.

He submitted his report at the end of the year, on December 24, 1952; subsequently, it was tabled by the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly in the spring of 1953 and published by the Dept. of Education. Upon its release to the public, it was favourably received by the provincial press and library publications and regarded as an important step forward in Canadian library planning.

Peter Grossman emphasized the necessity for a provincial library enabling law and outlined various points that should be included in a new Act. He proposed the establishment of eight regional library systems. His report stressed the need for an immediate appointment of a provincial library director, the creation of an advisory library council to the government, and a publicity campaign to raise awareness about the state of libraries. Grossman made practical recommendations concerning the organization of regional libraries and suggested a geographic administrative structure for the province. The creation of regional libraries, along with the centralized Provincial Library Service, was the key to future growth. The report recommended the eventual formation of eight regional districts with a base population of about 35,000, although districts with Saint John, Fredericton, and Moncton were larger (about 90,000 people).

Grossman's report was not lengthy; yet, he made a number of succinct recommendations which formed the basis for library development in New Brunswick for decades (p. 45–46):

- The establishment of a Provincial Library under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education.
- The creation of an advisory body to be known as the Library Council.
- The appointment of a Director of Provincial Library Services with appropriate staffing to promote services, centralized cataloguing, and inter-library loan.
- Cities, towns, villages, or counties should be authorized to

support libraries from general tax revenue.

- Local governments should be authorized to enter into agreements for regional services.
- The appointment of Regional Library Supervisors to the Provincial Library when new regional libraries were formed.
- Annual provincial grants to regional libraries be made on a matching basis as well as initial grants to establish adequate book stocks.
- Provincial support for public library buildings should be made available.
- More space should be allocated for the Legislative Library which would facilitate the operation of an Archives Division for the province.
- The Department of Education Library should appoint more school library supervisors and extend the Teacher's College Summer School library course to part-time regional library employees.

Grossman also reported on the condition of individual public libraries (pp. 47–51). He found that the underfunded Moncton library would benefit from “regional co-operation and Government support;” that Saint John was “handicapped by a poor location, an old Carnegie building, insufficient funds and a lack of professional staff;” and that Woodstock “has the best public library building in New Brunswick and pays more in proportion for library support than any other town in the Province.” The surveyor discouraged the practice by the Legislative Library of sending books-by-mail across the province or providing public library services to Fredericton (p. 29–32). Grossman was enthusiastic about the prospect of bookmobile service despite poor roads: “The real difficulty is not snow but mud, and the period of the spring thaw keeps heavy traffic off most roads.” (p. 23) Fortunately, work on the Trans-Canada Highway commenced in the early 1950s and road improvements throughout the province removed this impediment.

The government accepted many of the recommendations in the Grossman report. A director, James F. MacEacheron, who had

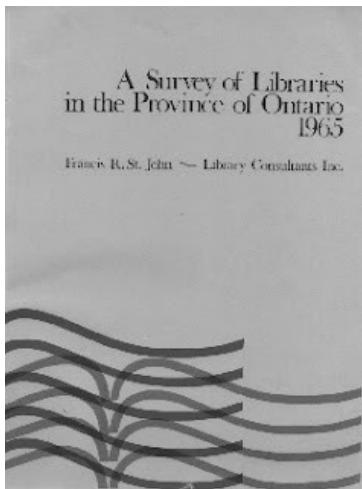
served on the board of the Cape Breton Regional Library in Nova Scotia, was appointed to provide leadership commencing January 1, 1954. A completely revised Library Services Act was passed on April 14, 1954. A Central Library Services Office reporting to the Minister of Education was formed with responsibility for central cataloguing, reference, children's work, and regional libraries. However, many municipalities did not enthusiastically accept the formation of regional libraries. It was not until 1957 that the Albert-Westmorland-Kent Regional Library began operation: the Moncton Public Library served as the center of a bilingual system that developed slowly, with Kent finally joining in 1973. After the establishment of the Fredericton Public Library in 1955, the York Regional Library began service in 1959 from the Fredericton Public Library. The region received funding from the city of Fredericton and \$7,000 from the Canada Council for three years. After consideration opposition, the Saint John Regional Library eventually was established in 1967.

The Grossman report influenced library development in New Brunswick for almost a quarter century. By the mid-1970s, regional systems were reaching a majority of citizens. By 1975 public libraries were circulating more than 2 million books per year. Peter Grossman became a significant figure in Canadian librarianship in the 1950s: he was elected President of the Maritime Library Association (1951–52), the Canadian Library Association (1953–54), and the British Columbia Library Association (1958–59). Eventually, he returned to British Columbia where he served as Director of the Vancouver Public Library for a dozen years, 1957–69.

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Ontario Libraries: A Province-Wide Survey and Plan, 1965 by Francis R. St. John Library Consultants

St John, (Francis R.) Library Consultants, Inc. *Ontario Libraries: A Province-Wide Survey and Plan*, 1965. Toronto: Ontario Library Association, 1965. 182 p.



At the beginning of the 1960s, Ontario's public, school, university, government, and special libraries were trying to cope with a rapidly growing population, changing technology, and staff shortages. The Department of Education had made a few incremental improvements after the Wallace Report of 1957, but leaders in the library sector expected more effective planning and financial support from Queen's Park.

When William Davis, the

Conservative M.P. from Peel County, was appointed Minister of Education in 1962, the Ontario Library Association (OLA) invited him to speak at its 1963 conference. The new Minister did not disappoint: he spoke about the importance of libraries as community agents and stressed better planning was necessary to achieve their service goals. Most importantly, he offered to finance studies sponsored by the OLA.

The OLA accepted the offer of financial assistance from the Minister and formed a Research Committee in 1964 under John Parkhill, head of Toronto Public Library's (TPL) reference library, to consider study options for the province. This committee chose Francis R. St. John, the former director of the

Brooklyn Public Library and a well-respected American library consultant, to conduct a provincial-wide study of all library types, which included universities because William Davis had added the newly formed Ministry of University Affairs to his cabinet duties in 1964. St. John's firm began work in January 1965 and released a final report in February 1966.

While the American consultant surveyed libraries in the province, major educational changes were being planned. William Davis was a dynamic minister: during his tenure, he oversaw the formation of a new community college system and two new universities, created an educational television network, increased education spending dramatically, and amalgamated thousands of small school boards across the province. The Provincial Library Service (PLS), headed by William Roedde, studied legislation to eliminate less relevant clauses (e.g., the per capita free library rate, free library status, and local plebiscites to establish libraries), to abolish Association Libraries, and authorize the establishment of five regional library co-operatives. In the library sector, studies proposed a new library school for the Western University and strengthened existing university library education in Toronto and Ottawa.

Francis St. John's work was the comprehensive study of school, university, special, and public libraries that OLA had sought for a decade. The report was a singular milestone in large-scale library planning in Ontario, especially for public libraries. The major trends in the early 1960s—regionalism, coordinated provincial planning, and service to smaller libraries in rural areas—were emphasized in 63 specific recommendations. Through his consultations, St. John emphasized the need for cooperative development and promotion of larger service units. The report specifically recommended the encouragement of larger regional units (p. 37-39) and that conditional provincial grants be directed to regions rather than individual public library boards. Association libraries (154 in 1964) were to lose their grants and be encouraged to contract with county or regional libraries (p. 31-34). No more county library co-operatives could be formed; the report recommended their operation should be

transformed into stronger county library boards. The task of centralized processing for all school and public libraries within a region was assigned to the regional library co-operatives (p. 43-51). Each regional system would have a reference centre responsible for information resources within the region (p. 52-58). St. John revisited the idea of TPL serving as a central provincial resource centre and receiving provincial funding for this task (p. 59-61). TPL would also maintain a central bibliographic database of holdings to facilitate provincial interloan and interaction with the National Library union catalogue operation. The report advised that orientation programs be developed for new library trustees for governance. A chapter on library legislation put forward 15 recommendations, especially regarding regional governance and operations.

Within the Department of Education, St. John advised the consolidation of all library functions in a single Library Division where the PLS, public libraries, elementary and secondary schools, universities and colleges, and government libraries would integrate their work and develop plans (p. 19-21). The Travelling Library service was to be eliminated (p. 13-15), and the PLS upgraded with more staff. Provincial direction would improve after the creation of a new Ontario Provincial Library Council (OPLC) to make recommendations to the Minister respecting the development and coordination of library service (p. 22-24).

Libraries in elementary and secondary schools and those in higher education required a different approach than regionalism. St. John was critical of school libraries and proposed that schools with at least 150 students be required to maintain a centralized school library with holdings of 3,000 to 5,000 books or ten books per capita in larger schools. A school with 250 pupils should have at least one full-time librarian. Centralized cataloguing at the University of Toronto was proposed for colleges and universities supported by government financing. St. John recognized the Toronto library had already been asked by the government to compile basic collections of 35,000 volumes

each for three new universities (Trent, Guelph, and Brock) and two Toronto regional campuses (Scarborough and Erindale). The Ontario New Universities Library Project began in October 1963 with a budget of \$1.3 million for book purchases over the following 3-1/2 years. The Committee of University Presidents was urged to support the concept of collection building to avoid duplication of resources. Further, the report proposed that the government provide financing to build in-depth research collections. St. John also recommended the government finance a long-distance facsimile experiment between the three largest collections at Toronto, Western, and Queens for at least five years. As well, the report agreed with plans for higher library education in the three universities, and it recommended the appointment of trained librarians and specialists to school districts and regional co-operatives to serve as area supervisors and field advisors.

St. John's approach to government and special libraries proposed more efficient, systematic operations: a system of depository libraries to receive provincial publications overseen by the Library Division in the Dept. of Education; centralized cataloguing and classification of documents by TPL for designated depository libraries; and submission of holdings into the proposed TPL bibliographic database. However, the report's influence was limited. It was not until 1970 that the Ontario government established a depository library system, and, in the following year, the Ministry of Government Services began to publish its *Ontario Government Publications Monthly Checklist*. Also in 1970, an Ontario Government Librarians' Council was established.

The initial press reaction to the report acknowledged that Ontario had fallen from the ranks of library leadership. It was a shock to some. William Davis immediately announced that provincial funding would be increased by 50% to \$5 million, a new Public Libraries Act would be introduced in the legislature, another supervisor would be added to the PLS, and that the Globe and Mail journalist, J. Bascom St. John, would head up a committee to study the recommendations. Davis relied on policy advisors

because his departments were expanding rapidly to reshape Ontario's educational system. The Department of Education was about to examine all aspects of education through a Provincial Committee on the Aims and Objectives of Education (the Hall-Dennis Committee) established in 1965. The concept of "open education," whereby students learned on their own progress rather than adhering to standardized grade steps, was on the march. When the OLA met in Ottawa to discuss St. John's findings in April 1966, it endorsed and amplified many recommendations, although the president, Leonard Freiser, Librarian at Toronto's Education Centre Library, criticized the report's focus on organization, not service delivery.

After a short time, on 7 June 1966, William Davis announced a completely revised Public Libraries Act, 1966: "It [the St. John report] recommended that legislation be provided for an Ontario provincial library council and advisory council and that provisions for regional library service be improved. We have accepted these recommendations and followed certain other recommendations in the report." He described the four main legislative sections:

- the powers and responsibilities of library boards;
- the role of the newly designed 23-member OPLC to develop and coordinate service under the Minister's control;
- the role of the 14 regional library co-operatives with Metro Toronto included in current amendments to the Metropolitan Toronto Act;
- the strengthening of county libraries.

The new Act eliminated some prominent vestiges of the past—the need for local plebiscites to establish libraries (1882), the requirement to be a British subject (1905), the voluntary Library Association form of governance (1909), and the minimum per capita library rate of 1920. However, the PLS would continue to play a limited leadership role because St. John's concept of a strengthened Library Division coordinating library activities in all types of libraries was rejected. The primary duties of the Director of PLS were to supervise the Act's operation, promote and encourage the extension of service, serve as non-voting secretary of the Ontario Provincial Library Council, and oversee

grant regulations.

There was little time to criticize or analyze the recommendations made by St. John. The new Libraries Act essentially refined the existing one initially formulated in 1920 and amended frequently over four decades. It was apparent the government did not intend to implement recommendations proposing the integration of library services across all educational sectors. Significantly, university and college libraries were moving independently: they rejected the idea of centralized coordination from the provincial government because they felt their interests lay within the post-secondary sector rather than regional groupings suggested by St. John. After the Commission to Study the Development of Graduate Programmes in Ontario Universities (the Spinks Commission) reported the weak state of most Ontario university libraries in November 1966, the Committee of Presidents of Provincially-Assisted Universities in Ontario (CPUO) began to develop a co-operative approach to sharing existing resources and to initiate planning for expansion. This Council approved the creation of a provincial-wide university system to include reader services, an interlibrary transport service, a bibliographic centre at the University of Toronto, and the formation of the Ontario Council of University Librarians, composed of the chief librarians, as an advisory body to the CPUO.

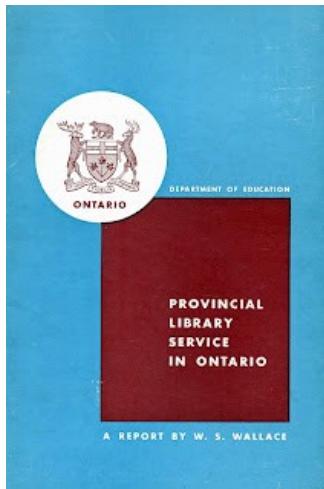
Community colleges agreed to form a Bibliocentre to acquire and process books centrally shortly after 1967. As well, school libraries remained outside regionalization efforts. The Ontario Teachers' Federation published School Library Standards in 1966. The Dept. of Education increased funding for school resources and library facilities, followed by publication of The Library Handbook for Elementary Schools in Ontario in 1967. More courses for teacher-librarians were introduced to bolster assistance for students in learning to use library resources. Regarding government or special libraries, St. John was criticized for omitting reference to federal libraries, many of which were located in Ottawa. The public library sector became the main beneficiary of the St. John findings, although the OPLC as an advisory, coordinating body did not live up to its potential.

The report framed by Francis R. St. John served as a general guideline for a centralized system of libraries within a province. However, the Ontario government, indeed, librarians, trustees, and officials at all levels chose to continue in the traditional ‘type of library’ sectoral organization entrenched across North America. A multi-type library development model was laid to rest with the prospect that technology, not administrative organization, would suffice to develop all types of libraries into an interconnected network.

Friday, December 29, 2023

Report on Provincial Library Service in Ontario by W. Stewart Wallace (1957)

Report on Provincial Library Service in Ontario by W. Stewart Wallace. Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, January 1957. 62 p. with six appendices published between 1944–55.



By the early 1950s, the plans originally made for postwar library reconstruction ideas were only partially achieved in Ontario and Canada. Passage of the National Library Act of 1952 and the official recognition of W. Kaye Lamb as National Librarian were the most successful endeavours. After 1945, the Ontario Library Association (OLA) relied on briefs and presented development plans based on ideas prevalent during the war's

reconstruction phase. The Ontario Department of Education had improved its grant formulas and regulations, introduced certification of librarians, amended older legislation, and added staff to its provincial library branch directed by Angus Mowat. Despite these improvements for local services, there was evident disenchantment with the 1946 grant formula that issued lesser amounts for more populous municipalities. In the case of Toronto, an arbitrary \$50,000 ceiling in the early 1950s limited the board to about a quarter of what it could expect to receive, i.e. almost \$200,000. Also, plans for coordinated regional or metropolitan types of service voiced in the OLA's briefs and discussed at conferences had not taken root in legislative provisions.

In the face of this perceived inactivity, the OLA's Provincial Library Committee report of 1952 became its most important postwar response. It was an elaboration of OLA's 1944-45 briefs on what a 'Provincial Library' could do and how it might function. It was a call for further study. Many in the library field believed promotion of larger units of service—consolidation of smaller libraries into townships, free counties, and regional libraries—might be a better strategy than forming a central, provincial library, likely in Toronto. However, in 1954 at OLA's Kitchener conference, the decision was made to prioritize a 'Provincial Library.' Other provinces had formed Provincial Libraries that offered direct book services and encouraged regional services because it was an efficient way to deliver services from Victoria, Regina, and Halifax. In May 1956, the Minister of Education announced that W. Stewart Wallace, who had retired as chief librarian at the University of Toronto in 1954, would conduct a study of Ontario public libraries. It was felt that Dr. Wallace's lengthy experience and knowledge of library collections in Toronto could be beneficial in creating a plan for Ontario's development. He was instructed to:

- (a) to study the need for a Provincial Library Service in Ontario;
- (b) to survey the probable requirements of such a Service;
- (c) to study the present operation of similar Library Services in other provinces of Canada and certain states in the United States; and
- (e) to report findings and make recommendations to the Honourable the Minister of Education before the close of the fiscal year.

Given his limited time frame, Dr. Wallace chose to focus on incremental solutions. His personal survey eschewed social science methodology and statistical analysis. The report he returned at the end of the year exhibited many features inherent in earlier 20th-century library studies.

The concept of a large, central library (or system of libraries) had persisted since the OLA's wartime Reconstruction Committee, which Dr. Wallace had chaired, proposed the Provincial Library model in March 1944. On exploring libraries in other Canadian provinces, he realized that more extensive, recently released

reports had led to divergent outcomes. Two provinces, New Brunswick and Manitoba, had commissioned library surveys shortly before 1956. In New Brunswick, Peter Grossman reported in 1953 that a regional system of libraries was necessary, enabled by improved legislation and the appointment of a director of provincial library services. As a result, New Brunswick revamped its Library Services Act in 1954 to promote regional library systems. To the west, in Manitoba, a survey over an extended period, 1953-55, summarized by George Noble, led to a decentralized system whereby the Legislative Library assumed control of public library legislation. Library extension work (the open shelf system and travelling libraries) became part of the University of Manitoba. Thus, Manitoba divided authority for library development. Across Canada, library administrative structures and services reflected the reality of different social, cultural, and economic conditions.

Dr. Wallace admitted his travels and interviews only reached a “small fraction” of Ontario’s libraries, but he felt he had visited a representative number. He also interviewed public library leaders, such as Angus Mowat and Freda Waldon. He came to reject the concept of an extensive, centralized Provincial Library and suggested the Department of Education provide more direction with four basic recommendations:

1. The current Public Libraries Branch under the direction of Angus Mowat should be renamed Provincial Library Service (PLS) and the Director of Public Library Service be retitled Director of PLS;
2. The proposed Director of PLS should inaugurate an interlibrary loan system to serve smaller libraries, and an “Open Shelf” system (books-by-mail on request from the PLS) to areas without library service in Ontario;
3. The staff in the proposed PLS should be increased by adding (a) an inspector of public and regional libraries, (b) a provincial children’s librarian, and (c) at least three additional assistants to staff the new interloan and open shelf services; and
4. Improved accommodation for the PLS, located at Huron Street in Toronto, should be expanded and refitted to facilitate the augmented duties and tasks of the proposed PLS.

The Wallace report recommendations were hardly sweeping by any means. From the outset, the report stressed continuity because a provincial library service already existed: “What those who have been advocating a Provincial Library or a Provincial Library Service have had in mind has not been, it would seem, something wholly new, but an extension and development of services already in existence.” (p. 9) Further, the recent development of the National Library at Ottawa after 1953 had brought on “radical” change: “To build in Toronto a Provincial Library which would duplicate on a provincial scale the resources of the National Library would seem to be, to a large extent, a needless duplication.” (p. 14) When Dr. Wallace factored in the resources of a dozen of Toronto’s largest libraries (e.g., the University of Toronto and Toronto Public Library) holding about three million volumes, he concluded that building “a brand new Provincial Library in Toronto” would result in needless duplication within the city itself. He listed some of the larger city libraries, observing that their resources should be available by interloan to other Ontario libraries (p. 19-20). He felt accumulating book stocks in a new central provincial library building would waste money.

Organizing services for the public, rather than building and administering a central collection in Toronto, should become the primary goal. In this regard, Dr. Wallace followed New Brunswick’s example by rejecting the concept of having the Legislative Library, with approximately 140,000 volumes, as the nucleus for a central provincial collection: “The functions of the Legislative Library are so different from those of what is now the Public Libraries Branch that they have little in common.” (p. 15) The Legislative Library should concentrate on serving the elected members at Queen’s Park and the civil service. Its historic function of providing books to schools and teachers—a task it inherited from the Dept. of Education—could be “ironed out” in a new arrangement with the proposed PLS. Similarly, Wallace cast off the idea for the Toronto Public Library to serve as a core for a provincial library or service by arguing “that the administrative difficulties involved in tacking a provincial

institution on to a municipal library would be far from negligible." (p. 19)

Dr. Wallace felt that coordination of services, not collection building, should be the foremost responsibility of the PLS: it should be augmented by the addition of two inspectors, one for children's services and one for county or regional libraries.

These were not new recommendations—the Department of Education's Hope Commission had made them in 1950. Two submissions made to Dr. Wallace from the OLA and the Canadian Library Association supported adding a children's librarian to provide professional guidance (report appendices E and F). While Wallace was firm about the basic need for a children's coordinator in the PLS, he was less certain about the success of regional library co-operatives. "Not only in Ontario, but in other provinces as well, I cannot help wondering whether the results have always been commensurate with the efforts put forth by those who have struggled (like missionaries trying to convert the heathen) to get regional libraries started. ..."

Nonetheless, he recommended the appointment of an officer of the PLS to foster the growth and development of regional libraries. (p. 17-18)

In sum, the Wallace Report on the department's administration of public libraries did not break new ground. It removed the older notion, never clearly accepted, about a central Provincial Library in Toronto and followed the model of separating the Legislative Library from public libraries. The report did introduce some new provincial services—interlibrary loans and the open shelf system, a clearing house for requests, and book supply to communities with inadequate (or no) library services. The mechanics of how a provincial interlibrary loan system would operate were outside Dr. Wallace's mandate, but he contemplated using a dedicated teleprinter service between the library branch and the National Library rather than establishing a separate union catalogue for Toronto libraries. In fact, by July 1957, a new telex low-speed data network for the transmission of messages would be in place on a Canada-wide basis, but Wallace lightheartedly admitted, "I am old-fashioned enough to believe a

telephone in Toronto could solve the problem.” (p. 23). He also briefly reflected on fees for interloans, which librarians would return to many times in subsequent decades. He realized attempting to serve more than a million people without library service by better use of travelling libraries was quite a challenge. Establishing an “open shelf” system in Ontario would necessitate enlarged quarters in the building now occupied by the Public Libraries Branch (at 206 Huron St.), an increased appropriation for books, and an increased staff. The Travelling Libraries Division of the Branch could probably look after the “open shelf” system since they would presumably be using a common book-stock, but at least one new assistant should be appointed... (p. 24-25). The report concluded the immediate cost to the Department of Education would be only \$30,000 a year: \$20,000 for salaries of new employees and \$10,000 for books, equipment, supplies, etc.

The Department of Education received Dr. Wallace’s Report at the start of 1957. At the OLA’s May 1957 annual meeting held in Toronto, the Minister of Education praised Dr. Wallace’s report and assured delegates the government would advance the cause of libraries. Angus Mowat digested the issues in the Wallace Report and submitted six of his own recommendations “at the least possible cost” later in 1957:

1. Enabling legislation for county public libraries based on existing municipal legislation with the expectation that counties would work closely with cities and towns, thereby superseding the existing county co-operatives;
2. Appointment of an Assistant Director of Public Library Service to promote and supervise county and regional library work and to assist with the administration of the Public Libraries Act and general promotion of service;
3. Appointment of a Supervisor of Children’s Library Service to select books for the travelling libraries and assist smaller libraries to develop their services;
4. Provincial funding for a regional library demonstration in northern Ontario for three years, after which local authorities would assume a “fair share” of financing;
5. Establishment of a system of interlibrary lending with the

library branch providing coordination of requests and shipments. There would be compensation for larger libraries for lending books. Increased staffing and enlargement of the Travelling Libraries collection at Huron Street would also be necessary to fill requests;

6. After building up a sufficient stock of books and providing additional accommodation for the library branch, the open shelf system for Ontario could be implemented.

In due course, recommendations concerning the Wallace Report were implemented in stages. In April 1958, The Minister of Education, W.J. Dunlop, met with OLA's Provincial Library Committee to review the Wallace report. It was agreed that the Report would be distributed at OLA's annual meeting at Kingston and that two departmental appointments would be forthcoming. William A. Roedde (BLS, McGill, 1951) was introduced as the new Assistant Director of Public Library Service specializing in regional services at the end of May. Later, in the summer, Barbara J. Smith (BLS, Toronto, 1953), who had experience at Oshawa with children's work, became Supervisor of Children's Library Service. For its part, OLA established a special committee on library legislation and set to work examining how to encourage more substantial units of service and improve library service.

By the start of 1959, the revamped Public Libraries Branch was progressing toward implementing the Wallace report. In April 1959, W.J. Dunlop provided authorization for a grant of \$30,000, thereby establishing a regional demonstration in Cochrane and Timiskaming districts, the Northeastern Regional Library Co-operative. The responsibility of these regional co-operatives was limited to helping member libraries by simply distributing books. Other improvements, such as strengthening reference services or coordinating interlibrary loan activity, was not contemplated. To prepare for the implementation of the open shelf service, expanded travelling libraries and an interloan system, space requirements and financial estimates were prepared to expand the Huron Street headquarters. A change of name to "Provincial Library Service" was approved to go into effect on 1 April 1959.

The remaining Wallace report recommendations could be implemented during subsequent legislative years when more satisfactory accommodations were attained for travelling libraries and staff. In the Legislature, the Minister introduced The Public Libraries Amendment Act of 1959 to allow the formation of free county libraries and larger union boards. It received its third reading in March 1959. Further creation of county co-operatives under the older 1947 legislation was suspended. Now, a county library could be established when seventy-five percent of the municipalities asked a county council to pass an authorizing bylaw. Transitioning older co-operatives to county systems with a single tax base and responsibility for providing services to all parts of a county was a progressive step that had taken a long time to achieve. Simple administrative advantages, such as a single county library card, might be at hand. The legislation did not include the formation of regional co-operatives in southern counties—this particular legal amendment would not occur until 1963.

On balance, the Wallace report (combined with Angus Mowat's subsequent proposals) was a modest success. Its importance lay not in its actual recommendations but its stimulus for the Department of Education to enact new legislation and bolster the small PLS in Toronto. Indeed, the report's legacy was short. The concept of travelling libraries and an Open Shelf service would soon become outdated in the 1960s and eventually abandoned after a disastrous fire destroyed half of the book stock at the PLS headquarters in 1963. As well, the National Library in Ottawa would supplant any idea of forming a Provincial Library in Toronto. The issue of regional systems mainly supported by provincial grants would eventually be enacted in 1966. The study by Dr. Wallace was a progressive step forward but a small one.

The Wallace Report has been digitized and is available on the [Internet Archive](#).

Saturday, December 09, 2023

In Solidarity: Academic Librarian Labour Activism and Union Participation in Canada (2014)

In Solidarity: Academic Librarian Labour Activism and Union Participation in Canada ed. by Jennifer Dekker and Mary Kandiuk. Sacramento, California: Library Juice Press, 2014; viii, 355 p., illus.

Collective action by faculty and librarians and their diverse organizations and associations has traditionally dealt mostly with academic standards and professional goals. With respect to economic issues, professors and librarians historically have engaged in individualistic pursuits. Until the 1970s, focused work to improve economic conditions was not considered appropriate activity for university or college faculty and librarians. The spectre of “trade unionism” loomed large at many campus meetings aimed at discussing collective action and improving salaries and working conditions. A further complication during this formative period—librarians’ predilection for creating associations no matter how small in membership—also impeded coordinated action towards certified and non-certified bargaining units (aka, special plans). However, after Canadian federal civil service workers attained collective bargaining rights and the ability to strike in 1967, the concept of public sector unions gained increased acceptance and faculty associations began to choose a familiar path of collective action.

It is within this background that *In Solidarity* delves into various challenging issues that academic librarians have engaged with over the years. The fifteen articles in this book are divided into four parts: (1) the historical development of labour organization of academic librarians; (2) case histories from various institutions; (3) current issues in labour activism and unionization; and (4) the practical complications and challenges

that labour issues present in libraries. This general-specific pattern of articles in alternate sections is useful because context is provided, and the nitty-gritty of labour activism in the library profession (known chiefly for its conservative elements) on Canadian campuses is addressed for a various subjects and alternative analysis.

The two editors, Jennifer Dekker (University of Ottawa) and Mary Kandiuk (York University), provide a short introduction to the text and introduce the broader aspects of the volume, especially the common experiences of librarians relating to unionization. Labour activism can subdivide into many particular topics: salaries, benefits, pensions, general working conditions, workplace security (aka, deprofessionalization), librarian workload, promotions, tenure, job classification, academic status, grievances, and even can be termed professional matters, like defining ranks, seniority, collegial governance, and general terminology (e.g., the transition over time from “professional librarian” to “academic librarian”).

The first section offers two papers: Leona Jacobs traces the history of academic status and labour organizing for Canadian academic librarians. and Jennifer Dekker’s exploration of the crucial part the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) played in academic librarians’ escape from the campus isolation of a “library ghetto.” CAUT’s acceptance of librarians as partners in faculty associations in the 1970s was a fundamental step forward because the vast majority of university libraries only provided a few dozen positions for librarians and little (or no) bargaining power on campus. In contrast, other predominantly female campus professionals, such as nurses, could rely on provincial or national organizations for assistance. These accounts of librarians’ struggle for recognition demonstrate the fragile and fractured nature of collective action across Canada during the past half-century and provide valuable background for three other chapters.

The second part of the book features three case histories. These accounts highlight the earlier papers and explore issues at

different institutions in more detail. Martha Attridge Bufton outlines gender and status issues at Carleton University from 1948-75, a brief presentation based on her more detailed thesis. Harriet M. Sonne de Torrens discusses the quest for academic rights and recognition at the University of Toronto, a story of determination on the part of rank-and-file librarians after a mid-1970s mini-revolution. Two college librarians, Robin Inskip and David Jones, outline a successful effort to organize and achieve parity within the ranks of Ontario post-secondary college teachers and faculty. These articles offer insight into conflicts between administrators, faculty, and librarians that occurred during attempts to organize and provide a coherent voice for librarians at their home institutions. Not every campaign was successful because the recognition of librarians was often disputed.

The third section featuring collaborative articles by librarians from different parts of Canada, provides insight into contemporary issues that librarians continue to grapple with in an academic setting. Academic librarians are partners in the post-secondary sector, and this raises a variety of topics discussed by the contributors. The role of librarians as teachers, researchers and community members is one feature. Another is librarians as faculty association participants, a condition of representing minority views and priorities within a broader, more complex context. Collective agreements are studied in another paper, along with an examination of the complaints and collegiality of determining what the “quiet librarian” would do or think.

The final section presents four case studies emphasizing the broader issues in practice today concerning librarian rights and responsibilities in various campus situations. A strike at the Western University in London highlights conflicts in a library setting. Success and failure in labour organizing (including one paper that reveals resistance to unionization in the state of Louisiana) unfolds in this section, followed by the issue of collegial self-governance with the establishment of a Library Council at Brock University (CAUT has long supported the

concept of library councils but their formation has been hampered by local considerations for decades).

Readers will find there are several takeaways from reading *In Solidarity*. One easy conclusion is that working conditions and status for librarians vary greatly in Canadian academic institutions. The case studies illustrate that the terminology for academic status or academic freedom is often defined differently in collective agreements. Nor are the requirements for research and service consistent by any means. Faculty views on the academic status of librarianship are also inconsistent. Further, although librarians are usually members of faculty associations, their level of participation and success is necessarily limited by their small numbers: The chapter on “The Mouse that Roared” is a descriptive epithet that does not apply in all cases. The articles present arguments favouring strengthening academic status and participation in faculty associations.

While there is a complicated legacy and contemporary challenges inherent in contractual issues involving librarian workloads and academic participation, the general trend presented in these pages is a positive one, even though Jennifer Dekker worries at the outset that “the gains librarians made in the 1970s and 1980s are being dialed back today.” Of course, a review of the history of librarian labour activity shows that opposition to collective bargaining and academic advancement has existed for many years. The recent (i.e., after 2000) attacks on the rights of academic librarians (including unjustified terminations) at Canadian universities and colleges follow this entrenched “tradition,” but are no less painful in particular situations.

The literature on librarian unionization and collective bargaining in any Canadian setting—schools, government, post-secondary or public libraries—is sparse, so *In Solidarity* is a welcome addition. This collection is a worthwhile effort to document librarian union participation and activism, telling the story in many cases from a first-hand perspective, and offering helpful examples of successful action.

Sunday, October 08, 2023

William Austin Mahoney: A Prolific Canadian Carnegie Library Architect

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Andrew Carnegie began dispensing grants to Ontario libraries. Many ambitious cities and towns submitted a request for assistance. One important requisite that Carnegie demanded was that the library be “free” that is, open at the point of entry free of charge—there would no longer be a subscription for membership. This condition would make it eligible for a specific amount from its municipality according to Ontario’s public library legislation. More than a hundred communities followed through and received grants.

One architect from Guelph, Ontario, William A. Mahoney (born 16 Sept. 1872 and died 13 Oct. 1952) designed fifteen buildings across the province. This short history looks at Mahoney’s buildings and their subsequent development until the period of the Second World War, especially in connection with Angus Mowat, who inspected most of Mahoney’s buildings and reported on their status about a quarter-century after they originally opened. There were examples of progressive and struggling libraries in Mahoney’s grouping prior to 1945.

William Mahoney’s contribution to the Carnegie architectural history of Canadian libraries was large in number but small in terms of interior design and exterior features. His preference for simple, square, classical buildings with raised first floors requiring staired entrances, and open floor plans suited the building period and size of grants that the Carnegie corporation favoured for smaller towns across Canada, especially in Ontario. For his exteriors he followed the neoclassical style associated with the École des Beaux Arts in Paris which was in vogue across North America when he opened his office in Guelph. There were two basic exterior types of neoclassical style: a columned temple entrance with a triangular pedimented roof or a

columned arch entrance divided into one or more bays which supported the roof line. In the interiors there were high ceilings, wooden shelving and chairs, oak floors, stained glass in a few windows, busts of famous literary figures, and fireplaces along with radiators to provide heating. Separate reading rooms for women and men were not uncommon. Spacing and reading for children for limited.

For the most part, Mahoney's ideas were in accord with changing principles for library buildings. In the leaflet published in 1910, *Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings*, James Bertram, the secretary of the Carnegie Corporation, introduced the open library concept wishing to receive a promise of funding. The *Notes* were intended for buildings in small communities or city branches. Bertram stressed simplicity: rectangular, one-storey buildings, undivided rooms, low ceilings, few restrictions separating readers from books, and unpretentious exteriors. Bertram personally inspected potential designs for libraries before authorizing funding. Fortunately, Mahoney's plans usually passed muster. Mahoney continued a successful practice, building schools and commercial buildings for many years until his retirement. Seven of his buildings continue in use as libraries in 2023.

A testament to Mahoney's design concepts came from Angus Mowat, the Ontario Inspector of Public Libraries from 1937 to 1960, about thirty years after the libraries opened. The Inspector found most of Mahoney's libraries were still generally community assets, although crowded and in need of extensions or interior reorganization. One suggestion, used in a number of Carnegie buildings in the following decades, was to house children's sections in basement rooms that had been planned for other uses. Another testament to William Mahoney's success as an architect is that many of his buildings remain in use more than a century after their construction, surely a notable achievement.

My PowerPoint presentation was originally planned for the Port Hope Public Library in 2023, but due to illness I was unable to attend and I have reproduced it here.

A complete listing of William Mahoney's buildings is at the website, [*Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800–1950*](#).

Some of my earlier blogs on Carnegie library buildings:

[Brantford, 1904](#)

[Brockville, 1904](#)

[Photo Essay on Ontario's Edwardian Libraries \(1989\)](#)

More Carnegie library buildings in Ontario are available at my previous website, *Libraries Today*, from the 1990s — [The Ontario Library Photo Gallery](#) — stored on the Wayback Machine of the Internet Archive.

My chapter on Carnegie Philanthropy (pp. 165-203) appears in [Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930](#) (1994) which is available on the Internet Archive.

Click on slides to read larger print.



CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING PROGRAM IN ONTARIO



111 Ontario libraries were promised grants by Andrew Carnegie between 1901-17

Fifteen Carnegie buildings are attributed to Mahoney – the most of any Canadian architect. Seven (underlined) with opening dates are still in use with additions.

<u>Fergus</u>	1910	\$ 7,000	still in use
Durham	1912	\$ 8,000	converted use
Forest	1912	\$ 5,000	converted use
<u>Campbellford</u>	1912	\$ 8,000	still in use
<u>Elmira</u>	1913	\$ 7,000	still in use
<u>Port Hope</u>	1913	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	<u>still in use</u>
Aylmer	1913	\$ 8,000	converted use
<u>Watford</u>	1913	\$ 6,000	still in use
Whitby	1914	\$ 10,000	converted use
Exeter	1914	\$ 8,000	demolished
Midland	1915	\$ 12,500	converted use
Tillsonburg	1915	\$ 10,000	demolished
<u>Stirling</u>	1915	\$ 5,000	still in use
Parkhill	1915	\$ 8,000	converted use
<u>Fort Frances</u>	1915	\$ 10,000	still in use

ANGUS MOWAT AND LIBRARIANSHIP IN ONTARIO BEFORE WW II

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- public Libraries reported to Province each year
- they received an annual grant
- libraries were inspected on regular basis
- libraries received advice and assistance from the Inspector of Public Libraries
- the most notable Inspector was Angus Mowat (1937– 60)
- Mowat inspected most of Mahoney's libraries in 1930s and 1940s and left a diary full of comments. The diary is at the Western University in London.



Angus Mowat, c. 1930

- mowat was chief librarian at Trenton (1922), Belleville (1928), Windsor (1930), and Saskatoon (1932)
- he was appointed in 1937 as Inspector of Public Libraries for Ontario
- he was a dynamic and positive force for library progress – for improved management, better finances, for library training, for upgrades to older buildings, and extended services to rural residents.
- He was a graduate of the Ontario Library School in Toronto, 1926

Typical Carnegie features before 1914

- Beaux Arts Style Classical styling
- central front entrance
- symmetrical features
- lots of steps
- raised basement
- columns with Ionic capitals
- portico entrance
- entablature and pediment
- glass transom above door
- multiple windows
- Interior perimeter shelves
- "free" library signage
- no room for children
- separate reading rooms for women and men
- restricted access to books



PORTHOPE Library shortly before 1914

Mowat diary report, Jan 26, 1938
 "Good displays of new books. Seven newspapers and adequate periodicals. The catalogue is author and title only. The Librarian, Miss White, was trained in 1925. The assistant librarian has also had training. They appear to be enthusiastic, quite well up in the technical phases of the work, and I should say that they have the confidence of their borrowers."



Today

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE



CAMPBELLFORD, 1912. Now the Trent Hills Library.



Mahoney often used a square design with sweeping front steps, pedimented front entrances, and rounded windows or doorways with radiating fanlights. Interiors could allow free access or restrict users because the delivery desk separated readers from the stack area at the rear.

Mowat Diary, Campbellford 16 Dec 1937

"A Carnegie building. Painted, well-lighted, with clean floors and excellent woodwork and furniture and a good arrangement. I should say that with one exception (children's room which is about to be altered) they have done absolutely everything sensible with this building."

The entrance is attractive and you know the minute you come in the door that this is a library that is being run by people of energy and understanding - who have definite knowledge of what they want to do - and are doing it."

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE: FERGUS



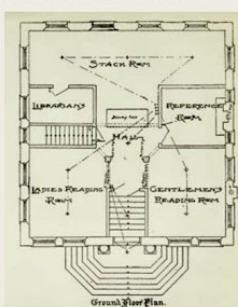
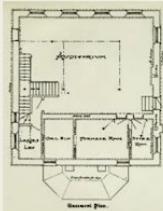
Mahoney's first library opened in 1910 helped make his reputation. His simplified floor plan, however, did not make provision for children's rooms or adequate work areas for staff which eventually led to crowding. A notable feature at Fergus was the stone construction. The front consisted of several steps to an arched front entrance flanked by two truncated modified Doric columns sitting on stone pedestals. The steps featured wrap-around styling. Today Fergus is a branch of the Wellington County Library system. It is also a heritage site.

Mowat diary, Fergus, 14 March 1950

"A very ordinary Carnegie building. Quite well kept up although the lighting is old and poor and the large basement room needs decorating. This room is rented to various local organizations and brings in about \$1,3 a day. The arrangement of adult books is in close stacks and poor. A lot of discarding ought to be done (will be when there's a county librarian) and there ought to be stack space. A small room formerly used for children is now a workroom and the children have one side of the reading room with appropriate furniture but poor shelving."

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE: HIS BASIC FLOOR PLAN AT FERGUS

Mahoney's floor plans for Fergus were shared with other smaller libraries by the Department of Education. This is why he was considered a "go to" library architect in Ontario. After 1911, his plans were approved by the Carnegie Corporation before any construction could begin.



MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE

Mowat Diary: **Stirling** 22 Oct. 1937

"The Stirling library is in a Carnegie building that was secured some 22 years ago through the activities of Mrs. Potts, who still chairman of the board and the prime moving spirit of the institution.

Mrs. Potts had made the library. The town gives an appropriation of 59 cents. Mrs. Potts again. The book selection is hers and it is a splendid one."



Stirling addition completed in 1989



STIRLING, 1915

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE



WATFORD, 1913



Today the Carnegie Watford library continues as a branch of the Lambton County Library.

Mowat Diary **Watford** 21 March 1948

"The library is a Carnegie building and generally speaking is much better designed than most small Carnegies. I would say the arrangement inside leaves much to be desired. The books are all contained in the two wings and in the alcove at the rear. It seems to me that a much more effective arrangement of bookstock could be made and the attractiveness of the library greatly enhanced if they were removed and the books placed out on wall shelving right around the whole building."

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE



ELMIRA, 1913

Fire in 1915 but library restored then. Extensive renovation and an addition to east/south side in 1978.



Mowat Diary: **Elmira** 26 April 1938

"On the whole this is a very prosperous and pleasing looking library. It is well patronized and it is without doubt the most scrupulously clean library building I have yet encountered.

There is an auditorium in the basement. The reference room is also in the basement, a feature which can scarcely be recommended since it means a diffusion of resources and a room which has to be left virtually unattended."

MAHONEY'S LIBRARIES STILL IN USE



Fort Frances opened in January 1915. An addition was made during Canada's Centennial Year, 1967. This library was the most northerly project for Mahoney. It was the only Mahoney library that was closed for a time during the crisis years of the Great Depression.



Mowat Diary, Fort Frances, 11 Oct. 1938
"There would have been a brighter side into the recent bush fires if they had got into the Fort Frances library.
Frankly I do not know what the answer is in Fort Frances. The library is simply a mess and it will never be anything but a mess. I am stumped by this library so I had better not say anything more."

TWO DEMOLISHED LIBRARIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY



TILLSONBURG, 1915 Demolished, new library opened in 1975. There is no record of a visit by Mowat to this library.



Mowat Diary, Exeter 24 August 1945
"A Carnegie building which for once is well designed and not cut all about with pillars and porches and pot holes. The books are all arranged along the back and side walls except that two short stacks are used widely separate so that they do not create a hazard. The first impression upon entering the place is an excellent one."

EXETER, demolished in 2000. New library 2002.

There is a sentimental, perhaps romantic vision, of Carnegie libraries in many North American communities that is invoked in pictures, stories, and local histories.

This drawing of the classical elements at Tillsonburg was created shortly before the library was torn down to make way for a new library in 1975.



Tillsonburg Public Library 1915 - 1974

REPURPOSED CARNEGIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY



MIDLAND. Opened in 1915. Closed in 1967.
Now a fashionable antiques/cafe.



Mowat Diary: Midland, 16 December 1938

"This is a Carnegie library, not large, but well planned with no wasted space and with a boys and girls room recently opened in the basement and made attractive with brightly coloured shelves and decorated ceilings.

In the children's room a trained librarian, Miss Schryer, has recently been appointed to work in conjunction with the Board of Education and Midland is warmly to be congratulated upon this move."

REPURPOSED LIBRARIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY



Aylmer. 1913. Closed in 1986. Now an insurance agency

Mowat Diary: Aylmer, 25 April 1939

Librarians had suffered a stroke and Mowat made various recommendations: e.g., thorough cleaning of the library with a vacuum; rebuilding of the children's book stock; redecorate the library, take juvenile fiction away from the adult fiction section and have all boys and girls books together.



PARKHILL, 1915. Became home to a Gallery in 2016.

There is no record of an inspection by Mowat of the Parkhill library

REPURPOSED CARNEGIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY



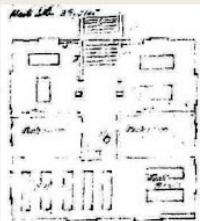
DURHAM. opened 1912, closed 2016



Sold by municipality and currently being renovated

Angus Mowat Diary: Durham 18 May 1945

"This is a very bad job indeed." He commented at length on too many steps, junk books, poor maintenance, haphazard arrangement, stacks which were too high, men's and ladies reading room still in operation. He returned in January 1947 and found new board members more amenable to changes.



CARNEGIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY REPURPOSED



FOREST (1912) closed in 1986.



Since 1986 the old Forest library has hosted various businesses and public services.

Mowat Diary: Forest 16 July 1937

"Only 36 books bought in 1936."

REPURPOSED LIBRARIES DESIGNED BY MAHONEY

WHITBY

Opened in 1915. Closed in 1976.
Today it is a law office.



Mowat Diary: Whitby 4 March 1938

"The situation here is simply that they have for the size of the town a rich collection of History, Biography, Travel and Literature. There has also been some good work done in buying for the children. The rest does not amount to very much."

Architect: W.A.Mahoney of Guelph
Contractor: James Bogue of Peterborough
Population as of April 8th 1911: 2,500
Per capita grant: \$4
Grants secured from Carnegie: \$5,750
Additional later grant: \$4,250
Construction started: in early 1913
Official opening: May 1st 1914
Number of book stacks: 8
Total number of books: 5,000
Price of library card: 5 cents



Friday, September 01, 2023

Parents of Invention (2011) by Christopher Brown-Syed

Parents of Invention: The Development of Library Automation Systems in the Late 20th Century by Christopher Brown-Syed; foreword by W. David Penniman and conclusion by Louise O’Neil. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited, 2011; xxi, 145 p., illus. ISBN: 978-1-59158-792-7 (paperback).

In *Parents of Invention*, Christopher Brown-Syed recounts developments in library automation from the 1970s to the 1990s, an important era in library computing dominated by what came to be called the integrated library system (ILS). After earning a BA at York University, Brown-Syed began his career with the emerging library vendors Plessey (a British firm that introduced an early version of the barcode) and Geac Computer Corp. (founded in Toronto in 1971). He knew firsthand about the revolution of circulation and catalogue functions that took place in libraries during this transformational period. Later, he turned to an academic career teaching at library graduate schools in the United States, at Wayne State and Buffalo, and earned his PhD in Library and Information Sciences at the University of Toronto in 1996. His dissertation, “From CLANN to UNILINC: An Automated Library Consortium from a Soft Systems Perspective,” reviewed the development of networking in Australia. Unfortunately, Brown-Syed died unexpectedly in March 2012 while he was teaching at Seneca College in Toronto.

Brown-Syed organized his historical account around interviews of librarians, computer programmers, and salespersons. He provides a Canadian perspective even though many of the fifteen contributors he interviewed are from the UK and Australia. There is a brief forward by David Penniman and a concluding chapter by Louise O’Neill (McGill University), who discusses important developments in library automation and the digital library, such as open-source software, open access, discovery

tools, and Web 2.0. We learn how the “parents of invention”—librarians and vendors working collaboratively—implemented new technologies to improve library operations in technical services, and ultimately in public reference contexts. *Parents of Invention* unfolds in eight chapters as the author discusses the challenges facing early ILS vendors during the period of mini-computer dominance. Vendors and tech-minded librarians collaborated closely in a competitive marketplace and automated environment that changed libraries forever.

(1) *Origin of Magic.* The ILS first appeared in the mainframe era of computers: with the development of MARC (machine-readable cataloguing) standards it seemed possible to mechanize many aspects of a library. It was a magic of sorts that needed to be unravelled for computers to create records and share them between libraries. As mini-computers came into vogue, the Canadian firm, Geac, became a leader in this pioneer development. Networking became a logical library activity, and new acronyms, now well known, appeared: OCLC (Ohio College Library Center), WLN (Western Library Network), RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network), etc. Eventually, the mini-computer triumphed, and a new era of commercialization and innovation took hold.

(2) *Customers' Perspectives.* Brown-Syed outlines customers views on ILS based on many interviews with clients in Australia. He provides background comments on library automation and networking using CLANN (later UNILINK) as an example. CLANN allowed libraries access to mainframe computing, thus introducing automation locally. While computerized searching of external mainframes continued, the introduction of cd-rom technology permitted libraries to begin mounting databases locally on workstations (e.g., ERIC) and end their reliance on expensive online searches through dial-up access to DIALOG or BRS.

(3) *At the Interface: Librarians and Vendor Environment.* Librarians working for automation firms were an essential aspect throughout this period. Some had considerable library experience and would eventually take positions with Geac and Plessey. Previous success and an ability to travel and connect with people

were essential ingredients. Managerial ability was another quality: some librarians became project managers for short periods, a challenging task but a satisfying experience.

(4) *The Nature of the Vendor's Work*. The author summarizes many interviews with the observation, “It is doubtful that they (the ILS vendors) could have operated successfully had employees not been willing to work long hours, to set and keep their own schedules, and to travel so widely when required to do so.” (p. 55) Workers, mostly tech-savvy computer professionals, were willing to go the extra mile to get the job done.

(5) *On Company Time*. The nature of work, collegial attachments, the ever-changing work environment, and personal satisfaction is outlined through many comments and Brown-Syed’s own experience. Employees learned to be flexible and accommodate schedules and travel.

(6) *Transformations*. Geac reached its peak in the 1980s. The Geac System 9000, the successor to the more limited Geac 8000 with fewer dedicated terminals, was introduced in the late 1980s for large libraries. “Turnkey” systems had truly arrived. The chapter gives insight into many details, such as batch processing, computer coding, bibliographic data, computer peripherals, circulation transactions, requests for upgrades, and so on. But the companies that included hardware and software expanded ILS capabilities beyond circulation to include acquisitions, serials control, cataloguing, etc.

(7) *Consolidation and Lasting Achievements*. The business of automation ultimately led to the rise and fall of innovative firms, such as Plessey, CLSI, and Geac. The introduction of microcomputers changed the business model for companies that relied to a great extent on hardware sales. Open-source development and the advent of Linux, Java, and Python also reduced customers’ costs. These improvements spelled the transition to a new era in ILS development. By the late 1990s, ILSs were including library users through OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogues) and web-based portals on the Internet. Despite the changing landscape for ILS firms and their employees, ILS sales continued to proliferate as library automation spread to every type of library, small or large.

(8) *The Future of Library Technology*. Louise O’Neil provides a

concluding chapter about significant developments in library automation and the digital library, such as the Internet, open-source software, open access, and Web 2.0.

“The development of the ILS was a remarkable collaborative effort, in which designers and librarians as customers played often interchangeable roles. That process continues, but with new challenges and opportunities taking the fore.” (p. 127). In the 21st century, the Internet allows many small client machines and larger servers to distribute workloads. Users have home access to online catalogues or library databases to view their loans or find records on their topics of choice. The computing environment has completely changed. The personable interactions of librarians and corporate employees we encounter in *Parents of Invention* are an experience of the past.

Brown-Syed concludes by observing that the super mini-computer was perhaps a ‘sunset phenomenon,’ the like of which we will not see again, although we can learn from the history of its development and the dedicated efforts of ILS library and vendor pioneers.

Saturday, July 08, 2023

Intellectual Freedom Statement: The Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario, April 1972

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Ontario librarians began to believe they should have a separate provincial body to speak for ‘professional librarians’ on issues related to unions, library boards, and governments. In 1958, the Institute of Professional Librarians became a section within the Ontario Library Association. Two years later, in 1960, the IPL sought incorporation and became an independent organization. This separation was followed by private legislation in 1963, An Act Respecting the Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario. Through the 1960s, IPLO served as a clearing house for professional information, helped its members (about 300 by 1970) with employment conditions, offered workshops, and published a newsletter and then a journal to keep members informed of its activities on current issues

Membership in IPLO required librarians to have a bachelor’s degree from a recognized university as well as a postgraduate degree from a library school (usually a BLS) accredited by the Canadian and American Library Association or training which the Institute’s Registration Committee considered equivalent to a postgraduate library science degree. Older librarians who did not possess these qualifications before 1960 also gained admission. However, IPLO began to face difficult financial conditions in the early 1970s because there was a legislated maximum membership fee and declining membership. New library science graduates considered IPLO outmoded, a remnant of unsuccessful efforts to achieve independent professional standing. Librarians were becoming more vocal about working conditions, low salaries, and sex bias in management. Academic librarians were collaborating with faculty unions and public librarians were joining the Canadian Union of Public Employees. In 1976, the Institute came to an end. Greg Linnell recounts its story in detail:

his article can be downloaded at one of my earlier blogs in 2009:
<https://libraries-today.blogspot.com/2009/04/>.

IPLO was reasonably active in the field of working conditions. The Institute developed general guidelines for employment, drafted sample contracts for individuals, and set forth guidelines for grievance procedures. A code of ethics for librarians was adopted, and briefs were presented to the provincial government on various issues. One notable statement appeared in 1972: a statement on intellectual freedom. There were already two statements by the Ontario and Canadian library associations that were readily available for libraries, but the IPLO Board of Directors and general membership felt a need to address certain issues that were librarian oriented. IPLO had engaged with two newly established colleges, Conestoga and St. Lawrence, in 1970, about issues arising from intellectual freedom. In the case of Conestoga College, while an IPLO committee found insufficient evidence to support a charge of censorship of materials even though three librarians had resigned in September 1970, citing cancellation of an underground magazine, *The East Village Other*. The committee recommended that the college prepare a written statement on the role of the library and that the librarian prepare a statement on its book selection policies. Two years later, IPLO emphasized the need for more explicit selection standards and librarians' responsibility to resist censorship when it issued the following policy.

STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Adopted by the membership at its Annual Meeting on April 22, 1972

The Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario affirms that library service is based upon the fundamental right of citizens to freedom of speech and the underlying tenet of a democracy that a citizen has the right to choose courses of action, public or private. In order that a democracy />function, the citizenry must have free and unhindered access to information and ideas as presented in a variety of media.

The I.P.L.O. therefore asserts:

1. that a professional librarian will take steps to establish a meaningful materials selection policy for the institution or constituency he serves, and that within the limit of the library's particular function the librarian will select materials in a manner to avoid the undue influence of opinions of the selectors, to represent a variety of opinions or approaches and to assert that materials will not be rejected because of the race, nationality or political, religious or unpopular views of the creator or because the materials may be considered as depicting the ugly, shocking or unedifying in life.
2. that the censorship of materials is not a valid activity for a librarian, library management or library board.
3. that attempts to curtail access to library materials, or to withdraw books or other materials from library circulation by individuals or groups must be resisted, and that librarians under such pressure should seek the support of fellow professionals, through their professional organization.
4. that the professional librarian will seek to encourage the climate of intellectual freedom and freedom of access to library materials and that he will adhere to the I.P.L.O.'s Code of Ethics and to procedures as outlined in the I.P.L.O. guidelines for handling grievances where these concern censorship and intellectual freedom.
5. that no member of the I.P.L.O. shall knowingly apply for or accept a position in an institution which has consistently yielded to pressure to censor, withdraw, or restrict access to materials for citizens' use or which subscribes to such policies in either a formal or informal manner.

The statement was directed to IPLO's members in public, academic, school, and special libraries and it differed in some respects from other associations, e.g., there was no reference to the use of library facilities. The statement referred to IPLO's

policies in one instance (clause 4) and in another (clause 2) included library trustees (virtually all who were ineligible to join IPLO). It called for the formal creation of collection policies to guide book selectors and inform administrators and the public about collection development in its broader context.

IPLO was not reluctant to rely on its newly adopted statement. In December 1972, it issued a press release criticizing letters issued by the municipal council of Pembroke to other Ontario municipalities for stricter enforcement of censorship. Of course, it cited its new policy; however, the statement was only in effect for four years until the Institute's demise in 1976 and did not influence librarianship in Ontario in the way IPLO intended, e.g., ethical guidance. However, the idea of policies for collection development, while not original, would become standard practice in subsequent decades.

Friday, June 23, 2023

Confronting the Democratic Discourse of Librarianship: A Marxist Approach (2019) by Sam Popowich

Confronting the Democratic Discourse of Librarianship: A Marxist Approach by Sam Popowich. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2019. 322 p.

“So long as we are a democracy we need intelligence; so long as we need intelligence in the community we need librarians; so we shall need librarians to the end of Time.” — George H. Locke speaking to university students in Toronto, October 1932.

George Locke’s assessment neatly encapsulated the thoughts of the “library community” in Canada, the United States, and Britain in the first part of the 20th century. Today, many people continue to support the belief that public libraries provide beneficial free and equal access to resources for everyone in the community that the library serves. Library historians have also followed this line of reasoning, using the themes of “temples of democracy,” “cornerstones of liberty,” or “arsenals of democracy.” But are foundational themes really so simple? Readers of two classic Marxist histories, such as Georges Lefebvre’s *The Coming of the French Revolution* (1939), which dissected the *ancien régime* by emphasizing the leading role of the bourgeoisie, or E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), which charted the efforts of working people to forge their own identity, might beg to differ. Yet, Marxist views about public libraries are seldom referenced because Anglo-American library histories are rarely written from the Marxist perspective. They are published from “the left” and present revisionist, radical views, but fall short of revolutionary analysis. Now we have a book written in the Western Marxist vein to reject the validity of the normative democratic discourse

of librarians and challenge ideas that have pervaded Anglo-American-Canadian library statements and practice for so long.

In *Confronting the Democratic Discourse of Librarianship*, Sam Popowich rejects the liberal-democratic tradition within librarianship which usually supports the concepts of library neutrality on societal issues, political pragmatism, and relative independence from economic forces or political influence. A general ideological outlook—a historical myth perhaps—constrains libraries and librarianship: the “library faith,” a long-standing belief that public libraries can provide materials (especially books) that could transform public attitudes, raise the cultural level, and develop citizenship, thus bettering democracy. For the author, the reliance on these ideas, especially by mainstream library historians, must be dismantled to change the profession, libraries, and our society. “From a political perspective this allows us also to ignore the very real problems inherent in our social and political world: racism, sexism, intolerance, alienation, hatred, violence, and political manipulation” (p. 3). Popowich believes the traditional liberal-democratic order of governments masks the oppressive structures of society and sustains the capitalist order of exploitation. Thus, by extension, librarians and libraries play a complicit role in the social reproduction of capitalism and its ideology. But all is not lost: the author concludes with potential strategies for resistance to the standard democratic discourse and capitalist hegemony that might contribute to a better society, a liberating vision shared in Marxist themes.

The corrective, mould-breaking lens of Marxism presented in the *Democratic Discourse* unfolds over nine chapters:

- (1) The Democratic Discourse of Librarianship; (2) Vectors of Oppression; (3) Liberalism and the Enlightenment; (4) Ideology and Hegemony in the Marxist Tradition; (5) Three Hegemonies of Library History; (6) The Library Myth; (7) Truth Machines; (8) Dual Power and Mathesis; (9) Conclusion: Lives and Time.

The first chapter explores whether we actually live in a democracy. It revisits the meaning of democracy and librarians’

tunnel vision on issues such as liberty, free speech, and intellectual freedom, issues often taken for granted. “True democracy cannot be partial, cannot be exclusionary, and I will argue that this is precisely what ‘liberal democracy’ has always been. The democratic discourse of librarianship, the idea that libraries are sacred to some actually-existing democratic reality, prevents us from working towards the achievement of this radical, total democracy.” (p. 49) In the second chapter, the concept of vectors of oppression, for example, sex, race, or gender identity, is introduced to show libraries have inherited oppressive ideas and practices inherent in capitalist structures which perpetuate an in-equalitarian society.

In the following two chapters, a critique of the Enlightenment search for universal truths, Capitalism’s relentless drive for profits, and Liberalism’s political and social successes/failures as opposed to a roseate outline of Marxist thought put the reader in the right place for reassessing the role of libraries. Popowich leads the reader through the contributions of 20th-century theorists to Western Marxist theory: Georg Lukács’ reification, Antonio Gramsci’s hegemony, Louis Althusser’s ideological state apparatuses and capitalist reproduction, and Frederic Jameson’s postmodern political unconsciousness (living in a ‘perpetual present’) and the idea of cultural logic. These thinkers have made significant additions to critical Marxist theory. Jameson provides a way forward because “we have to look at the political unconscious of library work, especially as it relates to the particular ‘cultural logics’ of the different periods of library history” (p.169).

This background leads us to the three (perhaps four) hegemonies of library history, a cookie-cutter view of the periodization of library history on the Anglo-American scene from the mid-1800s to the present based on the Marxist historical view.

1848–1914: Classical liberalism, industrial technology, factory work, the bourgeois library;

1914–1945: War and depression; the war library [a short period that could be combined with the mass library]

1945–1973: Embedded liberalism, the welfare state, mass work, the mass library;

1973–2008: Neoliberalism, postmodernism, the neoliberal library,

Popowich expresses more interest in the two latter periods, where capitalism and neoliberal philosophy prevailed in Western societies. In the “industrial library” (the era 1914–73), he finds the development of ideas encouraging the education of a democratic society (ultimately a library myth) and the substitution of reliance on moral education in favour of library neutrality. The author investigates aspects of the “neoliberal library” in two chapters: the issue of postmodern epistemology and library science, as well as library labour in the age of “truth machines.” The binary logic of computing/cybernetics is applied to social control based on the reality of the outcome, true/false. In fact, “one of the things that makes libraries so useful to capitalist society: libraries are machines for the reproduction of ideology” (p. 274). The library’s mythic presence of political and social neutrality in support of liberal democracy is linked with the mechanical process of providing information and programs that reinforce the inequalities of contemporary neoliberal society. These two chapters are mainly devoted to the structures of society with brief, depressing context for librarians and libraries: efforts in the daily working environment (the machines of reproduction) do not effect real change to systemic issues such as racism, alienation, inequality, and sexism. It is a nuanced deterministic view, a common element of Western Marxist writings.

The Democratic Discourse also points to the present, post-2008 period in its final chapters. Marxism posits that society moves through a series of stages and ultimately arrives at real freedom and a classless utopia. By adopting a Marxist viewpoint, Popowich believes liberation is quite possible. He believes we can employ two potential strategies for resisting capitalist hegemony and repudiating the democratic discourse of librarianship. The eighth chapter, “Dual Power and Mathesis,” considers utopian strategies to revolutionize the neoliberal

library and jettison its democratic discourse. One co-existing power, capitalism (a repressive regime), can be offset by another liberating force, “mathesis,” in which libraries prioritize learning over rote education, thus establishing a radical, authentic democracy. Popowich concludes that we must cast aside our fictitious innocence, which determines how we think about “lives and time” (pp. 293–299). Economic exploitation ultimately has detrimental costs in both human life and the time frame we have to resist its oppressive framework and liberal-democratic norms. The critical step must be to recognize our current state. “Constituent power can and must struggle against constituted power, can and must make hard choices, but those choices have to arise from concrete, collective experience, and a joyful taking on of responsibility. They cannot arise from a fatal innocence.” (p. 299)

The Democratic Discourse is punctuated with a host of theorists that buttress the author’s arguments. In addition to a few mentioned previously, we should note Popowich’s reliance on the work of Paolo Freire, who wrote on the development of a critical consciousness about society with the end of creating a more democratic culture; Stuart Hall’s critical work on identities and political power; David Harvey’s interest in the postmodernization (post-Fordism) of culture and politics; Jacques Rancière’s anti-institutional criticism of political theory and suggestion of radical equality; and Giovanni Arrighi’s or Ernest Mandel’s critiques and outlines of capitalist development. In the same way, Popowich invokes many Anglo-American academics who have written extensively about library history: Wayne Wiegand, Alistair Black, Michael Harris, Sidney Ditzion, Dee Garrison, and Jesse Shera, to name a few. As well, the viewpoints of authors engaged in contemporary issues are brought into focus, particularly John Buschman, Ed D’Angelo, and Stephen Bales. Although some of these writers have been revisionist or critical in their approach to library history, they have not produced counter-hegemonic histories. Ditzion and Shera wrote during the “consensus” period of historiography in the United States that emphasized continuity and the achievements of American democratic capitalism. In this setting,

libraries were reputed to be a force for democracy, equal opportunity, and individual achievement even though Bernard Berelson's research for *The Library's Public* (1949) revealed that American public libraries reached only a minority of the population, the better educated that he felt public libraries should focus on. As the 1970s dawned and social historians began to study things "from the bottom up" (a Marxist theme in many ways), revisionists issued a challenge that public libraries had not addressed American problems or were initially fostered by the educated elite (*aka*, the power brokers) to enforce social controls in reading for the lower or working class. In Britain, Alistair Black authored a "new history," one that eschewed narrative and advocated thematic, critical history in concert with the development of cultural studies and Raymond William's Marxist pursuit of the social history of ideas, especially the interaction between intellectual life and communities. These are still valuable histories today, depending on one's viewpoint: consensus vs. revisionism, narrative vs. analysis, social vs. institution, and modern vs. postmodern.

Popowich has authored a historiographic overview of library history intertwined with the culture of postmodernism and politics of resistance to neo-liberalism. Of course, he could have called upon others to support his ideas; for example, *An Essay on Liberation* (1969) by Herbert Marcuse, who decried the repressiveness of society in the postwar period and proposed new possibilities for human liberation, or Ian McKay's influential Marxist-based prospectus for Canadian history, "The Liberal Order Framework" (2000) which highlights the liberal-democratic promotion of individualism, private property, and capitalist accumulation in nation building during the 19th and 20th century. As for democracy, there are many types that are attractive: participatory, social, liberal, representative, grassroots, radical, and so on. Popowich states that "Democracy, we might say, is in the eye of the beholder" (p. 2), yet he does not offer a specific preference for replacing the liberal-democratic status quo. His interest lies in ameliorating systemic inequities: "true democracy cannot be partial, cannot be exclusionary," (p. 49). To explore the contested field of Canadian democracy I would

suggest *Constant Struggle: Histories of Canadian Democratization* edited by Julien Mauduit and Jennifer Tunnicliffe, a collection of historical essays recently published in 2021 that raises questions about the concept of democracy and its application in Canada.

Capitalism, Popowich asserts, must be overthrown before an authentic, truly democratic (utopian?) society can unfold. I would argue that *The Democratic Discourse* stands more in path of Western or neo-Marxist social theory rather than the developing field of Critical Librarianship. Critlib is reflexive and action oriented, but Sam Popowich goes further by setting forth a more powerful, transformative, innovative challenge to ingrained complacency in librarianship. Political awareness from a Marxist perspective: that's not such a bad thing after all!

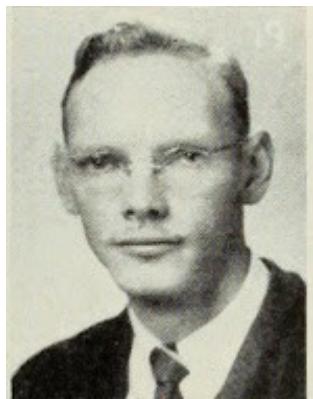
Sunday, April 30, 2023

The Ontario Public Library: Review and Reorganization by Albert Bowron (1975)

The Ontario Public Library: Review and Reorganization.

Prepared for the Ontario Provincial Library Council by Albert W. Bowron. Toronto: Information, Media and Library Planners, December 1975; p. 184; maps; tables; paper.

In June 1974, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities approved a provincial research study on Ontario's public libraries. Albert Bowron, a prominent library consultant, was hired to complete a general investigation. He was well qualified for the task, having worked in Ontario libraries for more than a quarter-century. Bowron had graduated from the University of Toronto Library School in 1949, worked at Toronto Public Library, and headed the Scarborough Public Library in the 1960s before establishing his consultancy in 1969. He was well known across the province, for he had served as president of the Ontario Library Association in 1966-67. By the mid-1970s he had issued reports on more than a dozen library systems in Ontario, large and small.



Albert Bowron, c.1949

The proposed provincial survey was very broad. It was to encompass societal features relevant to the future development of libraries; to assess the quality and variety of library services; to evaluate legislation and financial support; and to analyze government programs pertaining to library development. Crucially, the library community as well as the Ontario government, wanted to receive advice and recommendations regarding the

organization, financing, and coordination of public libraries that would outline a plan for development for the next decade. The current act, adopted in 1966, had emphasized regional development, but new developments such as automation, networking, and services to minorities were coming to the fore and often outstripped the resources of municipal and regional library services.

However, before Bowron began his major study, two major factors occurred: one at the provincial level, the other in Metropolitan Toronto. First, at the end of 1974, a new Ministry of Culture and Recreation (MCR) was established. The idea of placing libraries in a “Ministry of Culture” had been floated for some time, and the news that the Provincial Library Service Branch (PLS) would become a unit within the MCR in early 1975 came without much consultation, even though the library component consumed about twenty percent of the new Ministry’s total budget. For the PLS, this move was the last in a series of shuffles that situated it in three different ministries in four years. This reorganization occurred when the staff of the PLS had dwindled from thirteen in 1965 to eight in 1975. For Bowron, there were many unknowns because the new MCR would be developing its own program priorities. Second, in September 1974, the former Premier of Ontario, John Robarts, became chair of a Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto to review responsibilities in the two-tier structure encompassing the six boroughs and city. As a result, Metro libraries became less interested in Bowron’s study because the Royal Commission took precedence. Regarding consensus, the Metro library and lower-tier boards had not agreed upon a metropolitan strategy. North York had consistently advocated that the Metro board support the technical services, research, and coordinated needs of borough and city libraries. In the city itself, the construction of the Metro Central Library, scheduled to open in 1977, had always been a major objective to provide resources and information. The new Commission effectively meant Bowron’s observations on Metro libraries would not have much impact.

At the same time, divisions were becoming more apparent in the library community. The Administrators of Large Urban Centre Public Libraries in Ontario immediately came together in April 1975 to present the MCR with a brief that indicated the proposed study did not sufficiently address important library issues, such as financial support for urban libraries that bore the burden of resource networking. A year later, in May 1976, another grouping of public libraries, Administrators of Medium-Size Public Libraries, formed to speak for its constituency.

It was against this backdrop that the Bowron study began in 1975. There were some positives. The MCR was offering library base funding in 1975 at \$19 million. In addition, it would make \$400,000 available to regional libraries for Canadiana. Money for Outreach Ontario programs in libraries would continue in the MCR, and a new program with \$234,000 would be available for summer student employment. Many were relieved to hear that the MCR supported direct provincial conditional grants to public libraries rather than transfers to municipal councils which might reduce the amount distributed to libraries by the MCR. In October 1975, the Ontario Commission on the Legislature issued a report on government information service; it proposed that the government consider establishing a network linking libraries by telephone and telex to furnish public information and referral service. Its purpose would be to give every Ontario citizen a source to call for information on anything to do with all levels of government.

After a year, Albert Bowron produced a general investigative report with forty-three recommendations covering ten key areas. His report also covered general societal changes, an examination of Canadiana resources in libraries, and a review of Metro libraries; however, these chapters were mostly ignored in the debates that followed the submission of the what became known in early 1976 as the "Bowron Report." Reviewers quickly noted that data used in the report often was not reflected in recommendations. For example, the composition of boards. In an analysis of 1,296 board members, Bowron found 19.2 % were housewives, 18.2% involved in education, 16.1% to be business

persons, 12.6% were retired, 4.1% were farmers, 4% from skilled labour, and 25.8% “other.” Middle-income members prevailed: “The typical board member in Ontario in 1974 was a man, 30 to 50 years old, with a university or college education, who worked in the field of education.” (p. 80-82). Still, this observation did not lead to a clear-cut recommendation.

From the vantage point of almost half a century (2023) the Bowron Report is mostly forgotten: the fate of many reports. The library landscape he surveyed is mostly a matter of history. Of course, public libraries have been continually reshuffled in reformed ministries since the 1970s. Provincial library grants to boards have not kept pace with inflation, especially after the mid-1990s. Yet his report warrants re-examination because it did emphasize change and pointed to new directions that are firmly in place in the 21st century. Bowron stated libraries needed to adjust to changing societal trends and augment the traditional image as a place to borrow a “good book to read.” There needed to be concerted focus on cooperative work, technology, work with the disadvantaged and minorities, and service to students (p. 4-6). The image of libraries was an important element in transforming its status with the citizens of Ontario.

Thus, a synopsis of all Bowron’s work, *The Ontario Public Library*, which is difficult to find in a library today, follows on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

3-1 MCR and a new Ontario Public Library Board (OPLB) and native organizations sponsor a study of their services and propose recommendations for future development.

4-1 The MCR and local libraries work to develop better community services.

4-2 Regional system establish contact with MCR field officers and offer co-operative activities of mutual interest.

4-3 Standards for CICs be framed to permit local libraries to offer this service with supporting provincial grants.

4-4 The Minister of the MCR seek advice on the certification and recognition of librarians.

5-1 The PLS would be responsible for community information

centers (CICs), thus becoming a Public Library and Community Information Services branch (PLCIS).

5-2 The branch would supervise library legislation and CICs; conduct research; support the proposed Ontario Library Board; and liaise with ministry officials. Additional staff for electronic data processing, networking, and CICs, was urged along with service to Franco-Ontarians.

6-1 The report advised the Minister to appoint an Ontario Public Library Board to replace the OPLC.

6-2 The Minister of MCR appoint all OPLB members.

6-3 OPLB members to usually serve four-year terms and be reappointed once.

6-4 The Director of the PLCIS would be sec.-treas. of the OPLB with appropriate staffing. The Board would establish minimum standards, coordinate research, study financing, and establish province-wide policies for public library and information service.

7-1 All library boards be composed of nine members appointed by the municipal council.

7-2 Union boards be comprised of nine members appointed by each council.

7-3 Five citizen board members be appointed for three years and frequent reappointments eliminated.

7-4 Bowron recommended that a board serving less than 15,000 receive a two-year provincial grant but must exceed its provincial grant with local revenue thereafter or contract for services or join a county system.

7-5 Independent boards under 15,000 population must provide twice the provincial grant financing after two years of operation.

7-6 Payment to board members should be allowed, and all boards should be composed of nine members appointed by municipal councils to ensure accountability. Appointing bodies should exercise care to make boards more representative of their communities.

8-1 New regional systems and OPLB adopt better program budgeting.

8-2 Funding separate from regular grants be spent on projects with possible long-term growth instead of supplementing ongoing expenditures on materials or equipment.

8-3 The provincial government continue to support regional systems and develop a province-wide network of libraries.

8-4 Provincial grants be transferred directly to local boards and be sufficient to allow for long-range planning of library service.

9-1 Bowron urged greater efforts by the MCR and other ministries to form county libraries.

9-2 The appointment of members to county boards by county councils, including lay members, after three years.

9-3 Library service in newly restructured regions should become the responsibility of the upper tier.

9-4 Service levels in local communities in new county libraries be supported at the same levels or better for three years.

9-5 Special funding for initial county development was necessary for three years.

9-6 The repeal of Part IV, Clause 52, Sections 1-3 [the process to form a county library established in 1966].

9-7 Provincial support for the legacy Simcoe County Library Cooperative be withdrawn.

9-8 The PLCIS encourage the formation of county systems.

10-1 The OPLB and PLCIS monitor electronic data processing to ensure a coordinated approach to automation.

10-2 Provincial support for cataloguing, inter-library lending, circulation control and acquisitions using automation be studied by working groups in concert with the University of Toronto Library Automated Systems development.

10-3 The OPLB sponsor a workshop to develop a unified approach to automation.

12-1 Franco-Ontario staff member be added to the PL and Community Services Branch to serve French-speaking citizens better.

12-2 Libraries established in significant French-speaking areas employed Francophone staff

12-3 An annual grant for Francophone library service be transferred by MCR to libraries where more than ten percent of the population is French-speaking.

12-4 Two members of OPLC be Franco-Ontarians, and Francophone membership on library boards be instituted where feasible.

12-5 A provincial study be undertaken to identify Franco-

Ontarians' needs.

- 13-1 There be an integrated public library system in all thirteen newly restructured municipal governments (Metro excepted).
- 13-2 The reduction of fourteen regional library systems to seven federated ones based on the new MCR's regional offices.
- 13-3 There be one resource library in each federated system financed by the province.
- 13-4 Each resource library to be funded on a per capita basis as determined annually by the OPLB.
- 13-5 The OPLB establish meaningful qualitative and quantitative standards to act as minimum levels of service to be attained by public libraries.
- 13-6 The OPLB standards adopted by the MCR would be incorporated into legislation on which grant qualification would depend.

A variety of responses to the report surfaced extending into 1977. One weakness soon became apparent: a noticeable lack of public input into the actual report-gathering process. Fewer than forty briefs and letters were submitted during the survey, mainly from libraries, regional systems, or educational groups like the Ontario Library Association. Two major groups with conflicting views caught the attention of the provincial government. Some issues, especially unconditional grants, drew attention outside library circles. A new municipal group formed in 1972, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), weighed in with its preference to deconditionalize grants. The Association believed that municipalities should have the right to appoint all board members and have the option to dissolve a board and to make it a committee of council. Further, the AMO rejected most of Bowron's recommendations on county libraries. The AMO would remain vigilant on library questions by issuing reports countering ideas that library groups proposed. Another group, the OLA, also concentrated on funding, primarily increased provincial conditional aid for assessment-poor municipalities as well as capital grants for construction. Yet, the final report had little recognition of OLA's specific funding suggestions. The MCR was prepared to receive post-report submissions, but the onus was on the OLA and library agencies to assess responses.

Generally, the library community was indecisive and reacted negatively to Bowron's recommendations. It was felt that the report lacked clear direction, employed a somewhat faulty methodology, covered too broad a spectrum, and was seriously underfunded. Vocal critics denounced the restructuring of regions, criticized the lack of reference to capital funding, and decried Bowron's criticism of county library developments before 1974. Bowron had intended to "reduce the number, the types of library authorities, the ways in which members are appointed, to change the term of appointment and other regulations" (p. 69). He pointed out that in 1975, 308 boards were serving less than 10,000 people, a Depression-era number despite thirty years' counsel about the wisdom of larger units. How would boards react to a change in the method of appointment that might lessen their independence?

The surveyor had made judgements that were difficult to construct a consensus about, i.e., the federated library systems. Meetings within regions often produced conflicting ideas related to coordinated services or the value of centralized processing. In northern Ontario, the achievement of basic service needed proper funding to overcome distances and income disparities, not further study as Bowron advocated. The lack of rationale for the seven federated regions and the complexities of board composition for the new regional entities puzzled observers who had spent most of a decade fostering closer relationships in the existing regional environment. Many trustees felt Bowron's report did not sufficiently strengthen the PLS. Trustees and librarians were content with encouraging, not legislating, larger units of service.

Bowron's analysis of pro-forma (non-operating) boards upset many library trustees who relied solely on provincial conditional grants. He had noted their formation in eastern Ontario, the Georgian Bay area, and along Lake Ontario had effectively stalled the creation of union or county boards. Another deficiency raised in the Bowron review was the interconnection with federal libraries and organizations outside the MCR. Public libraries across Canada sought new services supported by the

National Library and the new \$15 million national science library erected in 1974, the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information. A recurring question during the review process was whether the provincial government would fund recommendations to make services more effective. Planning systems development and networking, automation projects, equitable funding, and revising provincial grants was not inexpensive.

An autumn 1976 session at the OLA's Toronto annual meeting, "Bowron and Beyond," agreed that a strengthened provincial library board and the MCR's lead in networking development was necessary. Some issues, such as the need for standards or guidelines, were not contentious. There was also wide-based agreement on some points, e.g., networking and infrastructure need. But support was tepid: there were too many divisions of opinion and reliance on the status quo to fashion new legislation or fund large projects. Like many government efforts, the Bowron study was consigned to office shelves as current activities and events continued to unfold that diverted interest or steered energies in new directions.

Building consensus and unity was essential because the MCR was a new entity with different policies. The sixties and early seventies had been a search for general public library purpose, structure, and role definition: circulation had surpassed fifty million and almost eight million people were reached. Bowron had emphasized change, but it would be another decade (1984-85) before public library legislation would be entirely revised and a handful of his recommendations, such as the composition and method of trustee appointments, larger regional operations, service to indigenous libraries, strengthened Francophone service, improvements for minorities, and provincial funding for automation, was adopted. In his pursuit for change Bowron was partially successful and, in the long run, the public library benefited the most from his work and ideas.

There is an informative review by E. Stanley Beacock, “The Ontario Public Library: Review and Reorganization,” *Library Quarterly* 46-4 (Oct. 1976): 452–454

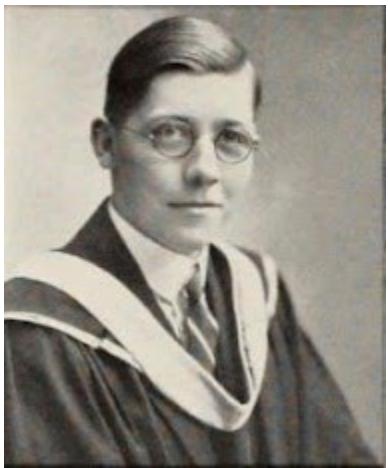
Terrence B. Verity, ed. *Libraries at the Crossroads: Proceedings of a Workshop on the Report, The Ontario Public Library, Review and Reorganization*. Toronto: Ontario Library Association, 1976.

Bowron’s work is the subject of a review in the March 1976 issue of the *Ontario Library Review* 60, no. 1: 5-10 with a correction in the June issue p. 116.

A subsequent provincial study by Peter J. Bassnett, issued in 1982, [is the subject of a previous blog](#). He studied many of the same issues which led to a new library act proclaimed in 1985 that remains the basis for current public libraries in Ontario.

Monday, April 17, 2023

James John Talman (1904–1993)



James J. Talman was an archivist, librarian, and professional historian who made many scholarly contributions to Canadian history. He was the Western's University's chief librarian from 1947 to 1970. Three of his major works continue to be studied today: *Anna Jameson, winter studies and summer rambles in Canada* (1943); *Loyalist narratives from Upper Canada* (1946, reprinted 1969); and *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816* (1970). His papers are held in the J.J. Talman Regional Collection at Western's Weldon Library. The J.J. Talman Library at the Archives of Ontario is a research and reference collection for the general public. His graduate BA portrait is taken from Western's *Occidentalalia* yearbook in 1926. My biography first appeared on the Ex Libris Association site in 2017.

James John Talman

Born September 15, 1904, Beira, Mozambique; Died November 21, 1993, London, ON

Education:

- 1925 BA (University of Western Ontario)
- 1927 MA (University of Western Ontario)
- 1930 PhD (University of Toronto)
- 1960 DLitt (Hons) (University of Waterloo)
- 1972 LLD (Hons) (University of Western Ontario)

Positions:

1931–1934 Assistant Archivist, Ontario Provincial Archives
1934–1939 Provincial Archivist of Ontario (1934-1939) and
Legislative Librarian of Ontario (1935–1939)
1939–1947 Assistant and Associate Librarian, University of
Western Ontario
1947–1970 Chief Librarian of the University of Western Ontario
Professor in History Department and Faculty of Graduate Studies
in post-retirement, University of Western Ontario

Publications (selected):

J.J. Talman authored more than 300 publications. A comprehensive list was compiled by Hilary Bates, “Bibliography of academic and journalistic writings by James J. Talman” in Aspects of nineteenth-century Ontario: essays presented to James J. Talman, ed. by Frederick H. Armstrong, Hugh A. Stevenson, and J. Donald Wilson: 334-50. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

Talman, J.J. and Elsie McLeod Murray, eds. (1943). Winter studies and summer rambles in Canada, by Anna Brownell Jameson. Toronto: Nelson.

Talman, J.J., ed. (1946). Loyalist narratives from Upper Canada. Toronto: Champlain Society.

Talman, J.J. and Ruth Davis Talman (1953). ‘Western,’ 1878–1953, being the history of the origins and development of the University of Western Ontario during its first seventy-five years London: University of Western Ontario.

Talman, J.J. (1963). Huron College, 1863-1963. London: Huron College.

Talman, J.J., ed. (1959). Basic documents in Canadian history. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Talman, James J. (1968). “Twenty-two years of the Microfilm Newspaper Project.” Canadian Library 25.2 (September–October): 140–148.

Associations/Committees:

1937–1940 President, Ontario Historical Society

1945-1946 President, Ontario Library Association
1954-1955 President, Canadian Historical Association
1956-1959 Treasurer, Canadian Library Association
1956-1959 Chairman, Governor General's Award Board
Member of the Canadian Historic Sites and Monuments Board
and Ontario Conservation Review Board

Honours:

1949 Fellow of Royal Society of Canada
1963 Honorary Fellow of Huron College
1968 Cruikshank Medal, Ontario Historical Society
1970 Order of British Empire
1977 Award of Merit, Alumni Association, University of Western Ontario
1991 James J. Talman Award established by the Ontario Association of Archivists (now Archives Association of Ontario)

Accomplishments:

James J. Talman was an outstanding scholar-librarian whose career began during the Great Depression. It was, he said, a time when there were more positions for librarians than historians. Dr. Talman was a successful Canadian university library administrator in the postwar period. During his 23-year tenure, 1947-70, the Lawson library was expanded twice, new libraries were opened for law (1961), business (1962), health sciences (1965), education (the 'flying-saucer library' at Althouse College, 1966), and the natural sciences (1966). In the same period, the University's holdings grew from 172,000 volumes to 1,500,000 and the library budget from \$40,000 to \$3,200,000. Dr. Talman was instrumental in expanding Western's Regional Collection housing the history of southwest Ontario and it was later named in his honour. Construction of the D. B. Weldon Library (opened in 1972) was planned and underway before his retirement in 1970. In conjunction with his wife, Ruth Helen (Davis) Talman, he wrote *Western 1878-1953; Being the History of the Origins and Development of the University of Western Ontario during its First Seventy-five Years* (1953).

Sources:

- “James John Talman, 1904-1993.” In *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2000, 6th Series, vol. 11: 153-156. Ottawa: Royal Society, 2001.
- “James John Talman, 1904-1993.” *Ontario History* 86.1 (March 1994): 1-8.
- Stevenson, Hugh A. (1974). “James John Talman: historian and librarian.” In *Aspects of nineteenth-century Ontario* edited by Armstrong, Stevenson, and Wilson: 3-18. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Saturday, April 08, 2023

Fred Landon (1880-1969)



Fred Landon was a journalist, librarian, a historian-teacher-administrator at the Western University, and an author. After graduating from Western in 1906, he worked at the *London Free Press* before attaining the post of chief librarian at the London Public Library in 1916. At LPL he established a local history collection and earned a Masters degree at Western in 1919. Then he became the university's chief librarian in 1923, a position he held until

1947. During this time, he oversaw the development of the new Lawson Library; as well, he taught in the History Department until 1950. He was President of the Ontario Historical Society, 1926-28, and, in 1948-49, he was President of the newly formed Bibliographical Society of Canada. A branch of the London Public Library on Wortley Road was named in his honour on September 8th 1955. Landon's portrait is taken from Western's 1941 *Occidentalalia* yearbook, p. 117. My biography appeared originally at the Ex Libris Association website in 2017.

Fred Landon

Born November 5, 1880, London, ON; Died August 1, 1969, London, ON

Education:

1906 BA University of Western Ontario
1919 MA University of Western Ontario

Positions:

1907-1916 Reporter and editor, London Free Press
1916-1923 Chief Librarian, London Public Library
1916-1923 Lecturer in History and English, Western University
1923-1947 Librarian of the University and Associate Professor,
Department of History
1946-1950 Vice-President, University of Western Ontario
1947-1950 Dean Graduate Studies, University of Western
Ontario

Publications:

Fred Landon published hundreds of articles, news stories, reviews, and books. A comprehensive listing was compiled by Hilary Bates, “A Bibliography of Fred Landon,” Ontario History, 62.1 (March 1970): 5-16.

Selected Books

Middleton, Jesse and Fred Landon (1927-1928). *The Province of Ontario: a history, 1615-1927*. Toronto: Dominion Pub. Co. (5 vols.)

Landon, Fred (1941). *Western Ontario and the American frontier*. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Landon, Fred (1944). *Lake Huron*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
Landon, Fred (1960). *An exile from Canada to Van Diemen's Land: being the story of Elijah Woodman ... 1837-38*. Toronto: Longmans, Green.

Landon, Fred (2009). *Ontario's African-Canadian heritage: collected writings by Fred Landon, 1918-1967* edited by Karolyn Smardz Frost, et. al. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books.

Selected Articles

Landon, Fred (1917). “The library and local material.” *Ontario Library Review* 1.3 (February): 61-62.

Landon, Fred (1918). “J. Davis Barnett's gift to Western University.” *Ontario Library Review* 3.1 (August): 16.

- Landon, Fred (1921). "A city library's work." Ontario Library Review 6.1&2 (August-November): 10-13.
- Landon, Fred (1924). "Adult education - University of Western Ontario." Ontario Library Review 9.2 (November): 34-35.
- Landon, Fred (1927). "The Toronto Conference-II: Canadian Library Association." Library Journal 52: 749-750.
- Landon, Fred (1930). "Public libraries and the extension activities of universities." Ontario Library Review 15.1 (August): 6-8.
- Landon, Fred (1935). "Lawson Memorial Library." Ontario Library Review 19.3 (August): 118-120.
- Landon, Fred (1939). "Lawson Memorial Library, beautiful building, is enduring monument." Ontario Library Review 23.1 (February): 9-10.
- Landon, Fred (1945). "The library at the University of Western Ontario." College & Research Libraries 6.2 (March): 133-141.

Associations/Committees:

- 1918-1920 President, London & Middlesex Historical Society
- 1926-1927 President, Ontario Library Association
- 1926-1928 President, Ontario Historical Society
- 1941-1942 President, Canadian Historical Association
- 1948-1949 President, Bibliographical Society of Canada
- 1950-1958 Chair, Historical Sites and Monuments Board of Canada

Honours:

- 1929 Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
- 1945 Awarded J.B. Tyrrell Historical Medal, Royal Society of Canada
- 1950 D.Litt. (University of Western Ontario)
- 1950 LL.D. (McMaster University)
- 1955 London Public Library branch on Wortley Road is renamed Fred Landon Branch Library
- 1967 Awarded Cruikshank Gold Medal, Ontario Historical Society

Comments:

Fred Landon excelled at many careers during his lifetime: he was

a public and university librarian, journalist, editor, historian, teacher, administrator, and active leader in professional and scholarly associations. He is best known for his academic contributions to the history of Ontario, especially its southwestern region. At London Public Library, he began to assemble local history materials that form part of the present day Ivey Family London Room. Fred Landon was instrumental in persuading James Davis Barnett to donate his 40,000-volume library to the Western University in 1923. Under his administrative tenure at Western, the Lawson Library opened in 1934. Fred Landon was an articulate lecturer and colleagues found him to be an efficient administrator. The libraries at Western were small in size, just more than 20,000 volumes, when Landon assumed control in 1923; when he stepped down in 1946 there were almost 170,000 volumes.

Sources:

- Armstrong, Fredrick H. (1970). "Fred Landon, 1880-1969." *Ontario History* 62.1 (March): 1-4.
- Skidmore, Patricia. (1992). "Mind and manuscript: the work of historian-teacher Fred Landon, 1881-1969." *Ex Libris News* no. 12 (Fall): 10-21.
- Banks, Margaret A. (1989). *The libraries at Western 1970 to 1987 with summaries of their earlier history and a 1988 postscript*. London: University of Western Ontario.
- Giles, Suzette (2015). "Libraries named after librarians." *ELAN: Ex Libris Association Newsletter* no. 58 (Fall): 7-8.

Saturday, April 01, 2023

Gerhard Richard Lomer (1882–1970)



Gerhard Lomer was born in Montreal in 1882: he was the son of Adolph and Ellen Lomer a well-to-business family. In his youth, he spent time in the United States where he made a number of contacts that would further his literary career as an editor for two major American publishing series, the “Warner Library of the World's Best Literature” and “Chronicles of America.” However, his main contribution came in the field of librarianship at

McGill University where he introduced Canada's first full-time one-year graduate library program in 1927 that was accredited by the American Library Association in 1931. My biography first appeared at the Ex Libris Association site in 2017. Lomer's portrait appeared in the January 1920 issue of the *Canadian Bookman*.

Gerhard Richard Lomer

Born on March 6, 1882, Montreal, QC; died on January 14, 1970, Ottawa, ON

Education:

- 1903 BA (McGill)
- 1904 MA (McGill)
- 1910 PhD (Columbia)

1910 Doctors Diploma in Education, Columbia Teacher's College

1936 Fellow of Library Association (UK)

Positions:

1904-1906 Instructor in English, McGill University

1907-1908 Lecturer in Education, Montreal Normal School

1909-1912 Instructor in Education, University of Wisconsin

1912-1917 Instructor in English, Columbia University School of Journalism

1918-1920 Assistant editor of two series, "Chronicles of America" and "Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature"

1920-1947 University Librarian, McGill

1927-1949 Director and Professor of Library Administration, McGill Library School

1959-1970 Assistant Director of Library School and Professor, University of Ottawa

Publications (major works):

Articles:

Lomer, G.R. (1906). "Education as university study." McGill University Magazine 5 (May): 322-345.

Lomer, G.R. (1930). "The university library: 1920-1930." McGill News 11 (4, September): 7-11.

Lomer, G.R. (1937). "The Quebec Library Association." Ontario Library Review 21 (1): 10-11.

Lomer, G.R. (1942). "The Redpath Library: half a century, 1892-1942." McGill News 24 (1, Autumn): 9-13.

Lomer, G.R. (1946). "Background of the Canadian L.[library] A.[ssociation]." Library Journal 71 (September): 1107-1110.

Lomer, G.R. (1949). "Some occupational diseases of the librarian." Canadian Library Association Bulletin 6 (1): 2-11.

Lomer, G.R. (1957). "The Quebec Library Association: the first ten years." Canadian Library Association Bulletin 14 (3): 103-106.

Lomer, G.R. (1966). "Alice One Hundred." Canadian Library 23 (2): 80-85.

Lomer, G.R. (1968). "1946—the prospect [for CLA]." In

Librarianship in Canada, 1946–1967: essays in honour of Elizabeth Homer Morton, ed. by Bruce B. Peel, pp. 20-21. Victoria: Canadian Library Association.

Books:

[Lomer, G.R. \(1910\). The concept of method. New York: Teacher's College, Columbia University \[Lomer's original Ph.D dissertation\].](#)

Lomer, G.R. and Margaret E. Ashmun (1914). [The study and practice of writing English](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. [2nd ed. in 1917].

Lomer, G.R. (c.1920). The Library of McGill. Montreal: McGill Centennial Endowment Campaign.

Lomer, Gerhard R. and Margaret S. MacKay (1924), eds. A catalogue of scientific periodicals in Canadian libraries.

Montreal: McGill University and the Honorary Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Lomer, G.R. (1927). Library administration: lecture and study outlines. Montreal: McGill University Library School.

Lomer, G.R. (1932). Report on a proposed three-year demonstration of library service for Prince Edward Island.

Montreal: McGill University Library.

Lomer, G.R. (1954). Stephen Leacock: a check-list and index of his writings. Ottawa: National Library of Canada.

Associations/Committees:

President, Quebec Library Association, 1932-1933

Member, Canadian Library Council, Inc., 1943-1946

Membership in national and provincial library associations: charter member of Canadian Library Association and Quebec Library Association

Member of American Library Association: various committees in 1930s such as Suggested Code of Ethics Statement (1930), Carnegie Grants-in-Aid; and host city for ALA Montreal Conference, 1934. Elected as Council member and later Executive Board member, 1946-1947.

Accomplishments:

Gerhard Lomer was already an accomplished educator, teacher,

and scholar before he became McGill's University Librarian and Director of the Library School in 1920. He was a worthy successor to Charles Gould, having established a successful academic career and taught courses at the McGill summer library school. Although his career as an administrator was clouded by unrelenting financial austerity during the Great Depression and the Second World War, Lomer oversaw the steady growth of McGill's collections. However, his main contribution to Canadian librarianship was progressive leadership in graduate library education at McGill. With the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation, which contributed \$139,000 over the period 1927-40, Lomer established Canada's first ALA accredited one-year Bachelor of Library Science program (1931) and organized summer courses in Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Alberta to address demand for positions. By the time of his retirement as library school director in 1949, McGill's reputation was firmly established. In retirement, Lomer continued to contribute to library education as assistant director and teacher at the University of Ottawa.

Sources:

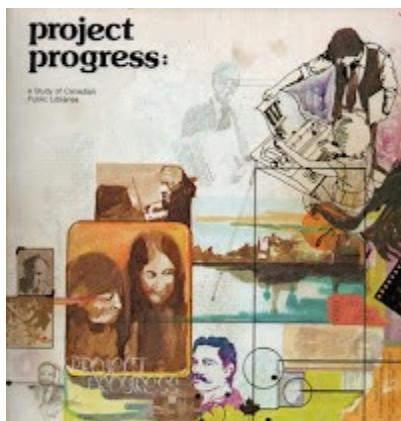
- Burgoyne, St. George (1920). "[McGill's new librarian.](#)" *Canadian Bookman* 2 (January): 11.
- Brown, Jack E. (1947). "Dr. Lomer's retirement from the Redpath Library." *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 4 (October): 23-24.
- Lomer, G.R. (1960). *List of publications.* Ottawa: n.p. [bibliography of his writings to May 1960].
- Jenkins, Kathleen (1970). "Gerhard Richard Lomer." *Canadian Library Journal* 27 (1): 130.
- McNally, Peter F. (1988). "[Scholar librarians: Gould, Lomer and Pennington.](#)" *Fontanus* 1: 95–104 [pdf download].

Saturday, January 21, 2023

Project Progress: A Study of Canadian Public Libraries, 1981

Project Progress: A Study of Canadian Public Libraries.

Prepared for the Canadian Library Association and its division the Canadian Association of Public Libraries by Urban Dimensions Group Inc. Toronto, Canada. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, January 1981. 120 p., ill. Issued in French as: *Projet progrès*.



My review first appeared with shorter text in *Canadian Public Administration* vol. 26, no. 2 (June 1983): 315-316 as follows.

In 1979 the Toronto-based Urban Dimensions Group Inc. was commissioned by the Canadian Library Association to study problems confronting public libraries in Canada. The

group's report, *Project Progress*, identifies a number of issues affecting libraries in a national context, and offers practical data as well as recommendations to respond to these challenges. Implicit in this survey is a muted call to action. Yet, in the introduction, the CLA Steering Committee members offer a guarded forecast: "the future is before us."

There are good reasons to be wary. Consider a few results from the 1979/80 general survey of libraries presented in chapter three:

51.8 per cent of service points are open less than 20 hours a week

38.4 per cent of service points circulate less than 50,000 items

per year
89.3 per cent of service points lend less than 250 books a year to other libraries
64.3 per cent of service points operate on less than \$50,000 annually
77.1 per cent of libraries employ no full-time qualified public service librarians
94.6 per cent of libraries employ no full-time qualified librarians in technical services
84.0 per cent of libraries employ no administrative or “other” librarians
46.0 per cent of service points are less than 1,000 sq. ft. in size
41.3 per cent of service points hold less than 10,000 volumes
19.0 per cent of service points have no catalogue access to their collections
32.0 per cent of service points offer children’s programs/story hours

Is this progress? It is disquieting to learn that eighty years after the introduction of children’s programming in Canada less than one-third of our libraries provide story hours. Why? The members of the research team pass over this - and other alarming findings – without much discussion. Perhaps their own doubts about the potential for corrective measures are too firmly established to give palliative comments.

The bleak statistics in *Project Progress* lead up to a discussion of library cooperation and cost-benefit analysis at the end of chapter three. *Project Progress* rightfully notes that the existing volume of inter-loan traffic is low, that present national bibliographic information services are “unwieldy,” and that only “little growth or innovation” has occurred since 1972. Given some of the results of the survey above, it is doubtful whether cooperative efforts at resource-sharing will become a widespread activity outside larger urban and suburban communities.

Chapters four and six analyze the education, utilization, training and attitudes of library workers. *Project Progress* reports that the unionization of libraries is viewed by workers as having little impact. Indeed, the issue of professional status of librarians in

relation to management has not been addressed adequately. *Project Progress* also identifies a possible weakness in library education concerning use of technology to improve services. No doubt library educators will disagree on this issue.

Two further chapters study usage of libraries by the public which incorporate some results appearing in previous surveys made by the federal government in 1975 and 1978. It is noteworthy that a full century after the introduction of free tax-based library services, the question, “Would you favour taxes being increased to cover necessary costs?” instead of cutbacks, elicits a negative reply from 45 per cent of the respondents (2 per cent greater than those favouring tax increases). Little wonder *Project Progress* recommends a more explicit market orientation and effective performance measures to support budget requests! Further, it is revealed that people believe libraries are more important to the community (61.5 per cent) than they are personally (42 per cent). The irony is that most professional librarians and staff would agree that they exist to serve the needs of individual users, not communities. Thus, it is no surprise that the 1981 Ontario Library Association conference theme was “Libraries Celebrate the Individual.”

Project Progress is the most important single document on public libraries to appear since *Libraries in Canada; A Study of Library Conditions and Needs*, the report of an inquiry chaired by John Ridington in 1933. In my view, most recommendations offer a sensible basis for further study and action. Nevertheless, there is an essential ingredient missing. Nowhere in *Project Progress* is there any serious analysis of the political process engulfing public libraries. Although all levels of government formulate policies, the financial realities impinging upon the majority of local municipal units limits the scope for leadership and innovation. The major policy actors – library trustees, librarians, school boards, councillors, interest groups such as library associations, and provincial civil servants – are largely concerned with administrative/internal decisions. In this milieu, political policy-making languishes. An opportunity has been missed to explore the political world of public libraries where

detailed administrative expertise is the road to advancement for librarians, and where trustees (and their libraries) suffer low visibility. Because the by-word for action in the fragmented library community is unity, changes are exceedingly difficult to achieve.

Project Progress does close with the conviction that improvements can be implemented by good planning, basically through national or provincial agencies such as CLA. This is a step forward in raising political awareness. Fifty years ago, the Ridington report sincerely believed that there was “nothing the national government can do” to create and maintain a national library at Ottawa. Clearly since then public libraries have come to recognize that meaningful rewards can be attained through moderate political action. But constructive changes continue to follow a sporadic course, because little is known about the political environment of libraries.

Postscript

In the mid-1970s, the Canadian Association of Public Libraries decided to conduct a study to ascertain the public library's effectiveness and provide future recommendations. Unfortunately, this ambitious undertaking eventually raised less than half of the original projected financial goal after five years. CAPL, a small 1,000 plus member section of the Canadian Library Association, hoped a national study would boost decision-making, serve as a basic footprint for planning, and stimulate librarians/libraries to focus on changing societal conditions (especially the importance of information provision). The first three chapters centred on a brief introduction, an explanation of the data and methods, and a description of public library activity. Urban Dimensions examined 1,178 completed library questionnaires from 2,426 service points, conducted 90 personal interviews of library workers from 51 libraries, interviewed 200 people from the general public by telephone, and met with 18 decision-makers. The report concluded with twelve general recommendations, some of which did not appear to come from the data presented in tables and graphs.

The information presented was fairly general and the findings, which blurred the distinction between a library as an organization and the totality of service points. As a result, there was some discouraging reporting on the availability of library services. The report was released at the CLA national conference in Hamilton in June 1981 with some fanfare that future discussions about its recommendations would lead to new directions. However, this prospect did not materialize. A year later, at Saskatoon in 1982, CLA's sessions on the report made little headway because conference-goers disagreed with some findings, such as the recommendation for professional librarians to form a national body equivalent to a licensing body. Many administrators surmised that the implementation of major recommendations would necessitate local initiatives which might vary across the country. The development of national strategies in a diverse public library community required financial resources that CLA, public libraries, related firms, and foundations were unable to provide. In retrospect, *Project Progress* was a valiant attempt to assess current strengths and weaknesses and offer guidance for future action; however, the report relied on subsequent activity at the community level and coordinated national leadership which CLA and leading library associations were not able to undertake.

Three additional important reviews:

Jean Tague and Sam D. Neill, "A Critical Review of Project Progress," *Ontario Library Review* 66 no. 2 (June 1982): 84-87.

Katherine H. Packer, compiler, "Project Progress: A Review," *Canadian Library Journal* 39 no. 3 (June 1982): 129-133; with a "Reply to the Review" by the researchers, 135-137.

S.D. Neill, "Project Progress and Professional Library Education — Continuing Education, Management Skills, Management Statistics," *OLA Expression* 3 no. 4 (Winter 1982): 19-21.

Monday, January 09, 2023

Elizabeth Dafoe (1900–1960)



For a quarter of century, from the mid-1930s to 1960, Elizabeth Dafoe was a central figure in the development of the University of Manitoba library in Winnipeg. No less important was her influence in Manitoba and at the national level. Her efforts were noteworthy and resulted in her selection to represent western Canadian and academic interests in the wartime Canadian Library Council which led

to the successful formation of the Canadian Library Association in 1946. Dafoe's pan-Canadian interests included the formation of regional libraries, a topic she promoted in wartime publications, and the creation of a National Library in Ottawa. She was President of the Canadian Library Association in 1948-49. From 1953-1960, she was a member of the National Library Advisory Council.

Julia Annette Elizabeth Dafoe

Born Oct. 22, 1900, Montreal, QC; Died 25 April, 1960, Winnipeg, MB

Education:

BA 1923 (University of Manitoba)

Library training at New York Public Library and University of Chicago Graduate Library School

Positions:

- 1925-1932 Circulation and Reference Assistant, University of Manitoba Library
1935-1937 Chief Librarian, Junior Division, University of Manitoba Library
1937-1960 Chief Librarian, University of Manitoba Library

Publications:

- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1944). "A National Library." *Food for Thought* 4, no. 8: 4-8.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1945). "Regional Library Service." *Queen's Quarterly* 52, no. 2: 195-205.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1946). "Your Next Job—Librarian [C.B.C. Broadcast., September 4th, 1945]." *Canadian Library Council Bulletin* 2, no. 5: 106-7.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1947). "The First Year: The Canadian Library Association Reports." *Food for Thought* 8, no. 2: 9-10, 27.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1948). "Librarianship as a Career." *Ontario Library Review* 32, no. 3: 199-200.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth, Freda F. Waldon, and Colin Gibson (1948). "A National Library for Canada." *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 5, no. 1: 14-16.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1948). "What Is a Librarian?" *Ontario Library Review* 32, no. 1: 19-22.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth, Freda F. Waldon, and Colin Gibson. "A National Library for Canada." *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (July 1948): 14-16.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1949). "National Library Service." *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 6, no. 2: 54-57.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth, ed. (1955). Future of bibliography and documentation. By Elizabeth Dafoe and others. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association. (Canadian Library Association. Occasional paper; no. 7)
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1955). "Research Libraries." *Canadian Library Association Bulletin* 11, no. 6: 319-320.
- Dafoe, Elizabeth (1958). "The Library and the Community." In *Proceedings of the Canadian Library Association 13th Annual Meeting*, Quebec City, June 13-19, 1958, pp. 7-13. Ottawa:

Canadian Library Association.

Dafoe, Elizabeth (1959). “A University Library [Manitoba].” Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada 36, no. 4: 106.

Associations/Committees:

1943-46 President, Manitoba Library Association

1948-49 President, Canadian Library Association

1949-1954 member, American Library Association Council

Honours:

Elizabeth Dafoe Library of the University of Manitoba was named in her honour.

Comments:

“It is our hope for Canadian libraries that they will eventually form part of a nation-wide system. It is my hope that as they develop it will be possible for them to lay less stress on information and more on knowledge, less emphasis on the book of the month and more on the book of the decade, less accentuation on momentary interests and fads and more upon infinite concerns and problems.” — Elizabeth Dafoe, Canadian Library Association conference, 1949.

“Her tireless message of the need for a ‘national library’ and her outspoken ideas helped to define the mandate of the National Library of Canada”. [extract from her biography on Library and Archives Canada. Celebrating Women’s Achievements].

“Miss Dafoe was a quiet and gentle person who inspired the utmost devotion in everyone who worked with her. In her years at the university many thousands of students and instructors alike called upon her for assistance. How widely her influence thus made itself felt can never be assessed; but assuredly it was great.” — Winnipeg Free Press editorial, May 9, 1960.

Sources:

Library and Archives Canada. Celebrating Women's Achievements. [Elizabeth Dafoe](#). [Web page archived, accessed in January 2012].

"Miss Elizabeth Dafoe" Manitoba Library Association Bulletin 8 / 2 & 3 (Sept. 1960), 1.

W.L. Morton (1963) "Elizabeth Dafoe: lover of language, literature and libraries." Proceedings of the Canadian Library Association, 18th Conference: 8–9.

Manitoba Historical Society. [Memorable Manitobans: Julia Annette Elizabeth Dafoe](#) (1900-1960). [accessed Feb. 14, 2016] "Elizabeth Dafoe," Canadian Library 17 (Nov. 1960): 171.

My biography first appeared in 2016 on the Ex Libris website. The portrait of Dafoe appeared in the *Bulletin of the Canadian Library Association* in September 1948.

Wednesday, January 04, 2023

Mary Sollace Saxe (1865–1942)



In the course of thirty years Mary Saxe raised the Westmount Public Library, situated in a park setting, into prominence in the province of Quebec and Canada. She introduced an open shelf system for users in 1917, opened a separate Children's Room in 1911, and a Reference Room in 1914. The library was connected with a beautiful conservatory, the Palm Room, in 1927. When she retired, the library had a staff of six assistants and an annual circulation of more than 100,000 books. Saxe was active in the cultural life of

Montréal through her membership in the Women's Art Society of Montreal, the Dickens Fellowship, the Canadian Authors Association, Montreal Art Association, Business and Professional Women's Club, and Canadian Women's Club. She wrote a book for children, "Our Little Quebec Cousin," and contributed columns to the Montreal Gazette. She also authored a few one-act plays, such as "All is Discovered," "Just a Tip," and "Rainbows" that were performed theatrically.

Mary Sollace Saxe

Born Feb. 23, 1865, St. Albans, Vermont; Died May 27, 1942, Montréal, QC

Education:

Received private education in her youth in Montréal
1899 Trained in library techniques under Charles Gould at
McGill University

1929 Took courses in librarianship at New York Public Library School

Positions:

1899 Training at Redpath Library, McGill University, under Charles Gould

1900-1901 Apprentice with Charles A. Cutter at Forbes Public Library, Smith College

1901-1931 Chief Librarian, Westmount Public Library

Publications:

Saxe, Mary S. (1904). "Westmount Public Library." *Public Libraries; A Monthly Review of Library Matters and Methods* 9, no. 5: 209.

Saxe, Mary S. (1910). "Popularizing the library." *Library Journal* 35, no. 8: 363-66.

Saxe, Mary S. (1911). "Classification of books." *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 59-64.

Saxe, Mary S. (1912). "With the children in Canada." *Library Journal* 37, no. 8: 433-35.

Saxe, Mary S. (1915). "The Canadian library's opportunities to encourage the reading of Canadian authors." *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 48-52.

Saxe, Mary S. (1916). "One hundred years ago - relatively speaking." *American Library Association Bulletin* 10, no. 4: 299-301.

Saxe, Mary S. (1917). "What seems to me an important aspect of the work of public libraries at the present time." *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 35-37.

Saxe, Mary S. (1919). "Books and their classification." *Canadian Bookman* 1, no 3 (July): 56-58.

Saxe, Mary S. (1919). *Our little Quebec cousin*. Boston: L.C. Page.

Saxe, Mary S. (1920). "The library from the inside, out!" *Canadian Bookman* 2, no. 2 (April): 16-17.

Saxe, Mary S. (1920). "What is the most important aspect of public library work?" *Canadian Bookman* 2, no. 4 (Dec.): 90-91.

Saxe, Mary S. Saxe (1927). "Libraries of east Canadian provinces." *Library Journal* 52, no. 10: 525-26.

Associations/Committees:

1914 Vice-president Dickens Fellowship Montréal Branch

1918-1923 American Library Association, Council member

1932-? Member, Quebec Library Association

Comments:

Mary Saxe believed education and training for all library staff was essential, stating in 1920: “But since no chain is stronger than its weakest link, so no library can give a better service all the time to its community than can be given by its poorest assistant. It is a fatal mistake to appoint one head librarian at an inflated salary and feel that any material will do for an assistant. If possible a library should have an all-star cast of assistants.” — Saxe, “What is the most important aspect of public library work?”

Sources:

George H. Locke (1931). “Retirement of Mary S. Saxe.” *Public Libraries: A Monthly Review of Library Matters and Methods*, 36, no. 6: 256-57.

National reference book on Canadian men and women, 5th ed., 1936.

“Miss Mary S. Saxe, Author, Dies Here.” *Montreal Gazette*, 28 May 1942: 4.

Elizabeth I. Hanson (1997). *A Jewel in a park: Westmount Public Library, 1897-1918*. Montreal: Véhicule Press.

Lajeunesse, Marcel (2020). “Mary Sollace Saxe et la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount.” In *Pour une histoire des femmes bibliothécaires au Québec: portraits et parcours de vies professionnelles*, pp. 27–41. Montréal: Presses de l’Université du Québec.

My biography first appeared on the Ex Libris Association website in 2015. The portrait is taken from *A Jewel in the Park* by Elizabeth Hanson (p 89) [published first in the *Library Journal* in 1933].

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Lillian Helena Smith (1887–1983)



Lillian Smith became the first Canadian children's librarian with academic credentials when she began her career at Toronto Public Library in 1912. By the time of her retirement, TPL was providing book services at Boys and Girls House, 16 library branches, 2 settlement houses, 30 school libraries, and two hospitals. The quality of services at Boys and Girls House so much impressed Edgar Osborne, a British

librarian and collector, that he donated 1,800 children's books to TPL in 1949, the nucleus of today's outstanding collections at the Lillian H. Smith branch on College Street. Lillian Smith made valuable contributions to the American and Ontario library associations in children's and youth services and was instrumental in forming the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians in 1939.

Lillian Helena Smith

Born March 17, 1887, London, ON; Died January 5, 1983,
Toronto, ON

Education:

1910 BA (Victoria University, Toronto)

1910-1912 Diploma (Carnegie Training School for Children's

Librarians, Pittsburgh)
1931 BS in Library Science (Carnegie Library School, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh)

Positions:

1911-1912 Children's librarian and branch head, New York Public Library
1912-1952 Head of children's services, Toronto Public Library

Publications:

- Smith, Lillian H. (1913). "Boys and girls and the public library." Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting: 67-70.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1917). "The children's librarian." *Acta Victoriana* 42, 2: 63-65.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1917). "A list of books for boys and girls." *Ontario Library Review* 2, no.1: 11-33.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1923). "The problems of children's librarians." *Library Journal* 48 (no. 17) 1 October.: 805-806.
- Smith, Lillian H., ed. (1927). *Books for boys and girls*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1932). "The teaching of children's literature." In: *American Library Association Children's Library Yearbook*, vol. 4: 73-80.
- Smith, Lillian H., ed. (1932). *Books for boys and girls, June 1927 to June 1932, a supplement*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1939). "The library's responsibility to the child." In: *The library of tomorrow: a symposium*, ed. Emily M. Danton. Chicago: American Library Association. p. 124-132.
- Smith, Lillian H., ed. (1940). *Books for boys and girls*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Ryerson Press.
- Smith, Lillian H. and Annie Wright (1941). "Canada: a reading guide for children and young people." *Ontario Library Review* 25, 1 August: 293-300.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1947). "The children's library." *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 24, 2 February: 56-58.
- Smith, Lillian H. (1953). *The unreluctant years: a critical approach to children's literature*. Chicago: American Library

Association.

Smith, Lillian H. (1959). "What books mean to children." American Library Association Bulletin 53, 4 April: 289-291.
Smith, Lillian H. (1963). "News from Narnia." Horn Book Magazine 39, October: 470-473.

Associations/Committees:

1928-1929 President, Ontario Library Association
1932-1936 Member of Executive Board, American Library Association

Honours:

Clarence Day Award, American Library Association, in 1962 for outstanding work in encouraging the love of books and reading.
Toronto Public Library established the Lillian H. Smith Collection in 1962, as a tribute to her years of work at Boys and Girls House.
The Lillian H. Smith branch of Toronto Public Library opened on 16 October 1995 in honour of the first academically trained children's librarian in the British Empire.

Accomplishments:

"The Unreluctant Years," published in 1953, distills Smith's ideas about library book selection and its potential to edify and stimulate children. Her book remains a classic statement for the rationale to apply critical standards of literary value in book selection for young readers and for her insistence on the provision and employment of 'best books' by children's librarians. Smith also edited valuable editions of TPL's "Books for Boys and Girls."

Storytelling and programming was another vital aspect of library work that Smith and her devoted staff actively promoted. A 'Book Week' for boys and girls became a regular feature before Christmas at TPL well before a national Young Canada Book Week was established in 1949. As well, from the end of WWII to the 1950s, librarians at Boys and Girls House collaborated with the CBC in a series of radio programs for children. Service to non-English speaking children was provided through Toronto settlement houses. Boys and Girls House was

always noted for its experimental approaches and offerings of drama, folk dancing, puppet shows, and clubs—features that are often taken for granted in the 21st century library.

Comments:

“Miss Lillian H. Smith long envisioned a nation-wide association for the advancement of children’s reading in Canada and, at a joint conference of the Ontario and Quebec Library Associations, held in Montreal in the year 1939, she took action to make such an organization a ‘fait accompli.’” — Ruth Milne, “C.A.C.L. Tribute,” 1952.

“Every parent in Toronto should be grateful to Miss Smith.” — Charles Sanderson, Chief Librarian, Toronto Public Library, 1953.

“She loves and understands children; knows how they think and what interest them. Among her associates, she has had the faculty of inspiring loyalty and transmitting enthusiasm—gifts which do much to explain her success.” — Toronto Globe and Mail editorial, 1952.

Sources:

[Lillian H. Smith website](#) developed by Michael Manchester. Accessed December 2022.

Fasick, Adele. M., Margaret Johnston and Ruth Osler, eds. (1990). *Lands of pleasure: essays on Lillian H. Smith and the development of children’s libraries*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

Canadian Association of Children’s Librarians (1952). *Lillian H. Smith: a tribute from the C.A.C.L.*, June 10, 1952. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association.

McGrath, Leslie A. (2005). Service to children in the Toronto Public Library; a case study, 1912-1949. University of Toronto Ph.D. dissertation.

Sydell Waxman (2002). *Believing in books: the story of Lillian H. Smith*. Toronto: Napoleon Publishing. [biography for children]

Giles, Suzette (2013). "Libraries named after librarians." ELAN no. 54 (Fall): 7-8.

My biography first appeared in 2015 on the Ex Libris Association website. The graduate portrait is taken from the *Torontonensis* yearbook of 1910 (p 102).

Saturday, December 10, 2022

Marie-Claire Daveluy (1880–1968)



Marie-Claire Daveluy was a Montreal-based librarian whose career spanned three decades in which she made a number of important contributions to Canadian library science. In 1937, she co-founded the École de bibliothécaires at the Université de Montréal. She served as this school's chair for several years and sought to combine American library techniques within a French-Canadian context. Daveluy also helped establish the

Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française in 1943. A noted literary figure, her novels and short works for youth and children won her a number of meritorious awards. Daveluy's pioneering efforts succeeded within a male-dominated profession that adhered to moral and religious principles prescribed by the Catholic Church which governed many political and social institutions in Quebec before the 1960s "Quiet Revolution."

Her portrait is taken from L'Académie canadienne-française by Victor Barbeau (Montréal, c.1963), p 41. My biography appeared earlier at the Ex Libris Association site in 2020.

Marie-Claire Daveluy

Born August 15, 1880, Montreal; Died January 21, 1968, Montreal.

Education:

Hochelaga Convent, Montreal

1920 Diploma in librarianship (McGill University summer library school)

1943 LL.D. (Université de Montréal)

Positions:

1920–1944 Assistant librarian, Bibliothèque municipale de Montréal

1932–1941 Head of cataloguing, Bibliothèque municipale de Montréal

Director of studies (1937–1942) and professor at the École de Bibliothécaires, Montréal

Publications (major contributions):

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1919). *L'orphelinat catholique de Montréal : en appendice la Société des dames de charité de 1827.* Montréal: Imprimé au Devoir.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1923). *Les aventures de Perrine et de Charlot.* Montréal: Bibliothèque de l'Action française.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1926). *Le filleul du roi Grolo suivi de La médaille de la Vierge.* Montréal: Bibliothèque de l'Action française.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire and Jacques Laurent (1934). *Jeanne Mance.* Montréal: Albert Lévesque.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1936). *Une révolte au pays des fées.* Montréal: Albert Lévesque.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1938). *Charlot à la Mission des martyrs.* Montréal: Librairie Granger Frères.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1940). *Le Richelieu héroïque: les jours tragiques de 1837.* Montréal: Librairie Granger Frères.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1940). “*L'École de bibliothécaires de l'Université de Montréal.*” *Culture: sciences religieuses et sciences profanes au Canada* 1 (1) avril: 13-18.

Daveluy, Marie Claire (1944). ‘*Les jeux dramatiques de l'histoire*'; Que disaient nos aïeules?; Le ‘*Général*’ Vallières; Une visite inattendue; trois pièces en un acte. Montréal: Libr. Granger Fre'res.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1945). "L'École de bibliothécaires: son but — son enseignement." *L'Action Universitaire: Revue Des Diplômés de l'Université de Montréal* 11 (10 juin): 119-125.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1947). "Ma carrière." *La bonne parole* 37, no. 3 (mars): 3–7 and 37, no. 4 (avril): 6–9.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1948). "L'École de bibliothécaires: son histoire, ses buts, ses initiatives," *Lectures: revue mensuelle de bibliographie critique* 3, no 5 (janvier): 303–309.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1949). *Essai d'un code de classement en langue française*. Montréal: Éditions Fides.

Daveluy, Marie -Claire (1952). *Instructions pour la rédaction des catalogues de bibliothèques*. Montréal: Éditions Fides [vol. 1].

Daveluy, Marie-Claire and Jacques Laurent (1962). *Jeanne Mance, 1606-1673*. 2. éd., rev. et mise à jour. Montréal: Fides.

Daveluy, Marie-Claire (1965). *La Société de Notre Dame de Montréal, 1639-1663: son histoire, ses membres, son manifeste*. Montréal: Fides.

Associations:

Vice-President, Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française.

Membership, executive and honorary positions in various associations: Académie canadienne-française, Société des écrivains canadiens, Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Société historique de Montréal, Orphelinat Catholique.

Awards and Accomplishments:

Marie-Claire Daveluy was a literary author, librarian, bibliographer, and historian. She is likely best known as the author of popular children's works exemplified by *Les Aventures de Perrine et de Charlot*. Her stories were based on historical themes and provided a moral compass for young children.

During her lifetime she was often at the forefront of cultural life and was accorded many honours.

—The first female member of the Société historique de Montréal in 1917.

—Prix David (Province of Quebec) awarded for literary merit in 1924 and 1934.

- Prix de l'Académie Française, Paris, awarded in 1934 for Jeanne Mance.
- Co-founder with Aegidius Fauteux, Émile Deguire, and Paul-Aimé Martin, of the École de Bibliothécaires de l'Université de Montréal.
- She helped found the Association canadienne des bibliothèques d'institutions in 1943 [known as the Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française after 1948].
- Founding member of Académie canadienne-française in 1944.
- As a member of the Conseil de l'École de Bibliothécaires, she was a signatory to the declaration, “Les bibliothèques dans la province de Québec,” in 1944 which emphasized the public library as a responsible provincial educational institution for rural and urban communities.
- Médaille du centenaire, Société historique de Montréal awarded in 1958.
- Parc Marie-Claire-Daveluy, a small streetside spot in Montreal, was named in her honour in 1987.

Sources:

- Chabot, Juliette (1968). “Marie-Claire Daveluy (1880-1968), bibliothécaire et femme de lettres.” *Bulletin de l'Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française* 14(1): 12–15.
- Morisset, Auguste Marie (1977). “Marie-Claire Daveluy, bibliothécaire, bibliographe, écrivain.” In *Livre, bibliothèque et culture québécoise; : mélanges offerts à Edmond Desrochers*, edited by Georges-Aimé Chartrand, vol. 1: pp. 405–423. Montréal: Asted.
- Grivel, Marie-Hélène (2016). “Créer une littérature nationale au Québec: l'impact des textes de Marie-Claire Daveluy, de La presse aux sagas.” *Strenae* no. 11 (October).
- Bienvenue, Louise (2018). “Marie-Claire Daveluy (1880-1968), historienne des femmes.” *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 51 (November): 329–352, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/his.2018.0029>.
- Lajeunesse, Marcel, Éric Leroux, and Marie D. Martel (2020). *Pour une histoire des femmes bibliothécaires au Québec: portraits et parcours de vies professionnelles*, “Marie-Claire

Daveluy, bibliothécaire de carrière,” pp. 43–75. Québec, Presse de l’Université du Québec.

There is an excellent French language biography with a short English translation at [Marie-Claire Daveluy in Wikipédia](#). Accessed December 17, 2021.

Sunday, December 04, 2022

Mary Kinley Ingraham (1874–1949)



FIGURE 3 Mary Kinley Ingraham's official Acadia University faculty photo (date unknown). Courtesy of the Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University.

Mary Kinley Ingraham was the chief librarian at Acadia University from 1917-1944 at a time when very few females headed academic libraries in North America. Fittingly, her achievements include literary works as well as academic publications. As an acknowledged leader in Maritime librarianship, she was one of the founders of the Maritime Library Association in 1918. Ingraham was also an innovator: under her guidance, Acadia

launched a pioneering bookmobile service to three provinces in 1930.

My biography appeared earlier in 2015 in the Ex Libris Association biography website. The image from the Acadia University archives is taken from Tanja Harrison's article, "The courage to connect: Mary Kinley Ingraham and the development of libraries in the Maritimes" (p. 80).

Mary Kinley Ingraham

Born March 6, 1874, Cape Wolfe (or West Cape), PEI. Died November 19, 1949, Livermore, Maine, USA

Education:

1899 Graduate of Acadia Ladies' Seminary
1915 BA (Acadia University)
1916 MA (Acadia University)
1917 Summer course (Simmons College School of Library Science, Boston)

Positions:

c.1897-1905 School teacher in Nova Scotia
1911-1913 School teacher in Massachusetts and Georgia, USA
1917-1944 Chief Librarian, Acadia University
1918-1944 Instructor, library science, Acadia University

Publications:

Ingraham, M.K. (1921). "Italian and English book collectors of the Renaissance." *Dalhousie Review* 1, no. 3: 293-300.
Ingraham, M.K. (1920). *Acadia; a play in five acts*. Wolfville, NS: Davidson Bros.
Ingraham, M.K. (1921). "Librarianship as a profession." *Canadian Bookman* n.s., 3, no. 1: 38-40.
Ingraham, M.K. (1931). "The bookmobiles of Acadia University," *Library Journal* 56, 15 January: 62-63.
Ingraham, M.K. (1932). *A month of dreams. [poetry]* Wolfville, NS.: n.p.
Ingraham, M.K. (1940). "Sixth annual conference of the reorganized Maritime Library Association." *Bulletin of the Maritime Library Association* 5, no. 2: 2-6.
Ingraham, M.K. (1947). *Seventy-five years: historical sketch of the United Baptist Woman's Missionary Union in the Maritime Provinces of Canada*. Kentville, NS: n.p.
Ingraham, M.K. (1949). "My favorite books." *Bulletin of the Maritime Library Association* 13, no. 2: 1-2.

Associations/Committees:

1918-1944 Secretary-Treasurer, Maritime Library (Institute) Association

Honours:

1947 DCL, Acadia University

Accomplishments:

Mary Kinley Ingraham was a significant public figure in the development of libraries in the Maritime Provinces after she became chief librarian of the Emmerson Memorial Library at Acadia University in 1917. During her quarter century tenure, she improved and expanded circulating holdings, special collections, and library services to students and faculty, even during the Great Depression. Trained initially as teacher, she saw the need to institute formal courses on library education as part of the BA program at Acadia for Maritime library students. As well, she inaugurated a bookmobile service in 1930-31 for rural Maritime readers who were not served by public libraries in three provinces. Later, Acadia operated a travelling library service for communities that continued until WW II. Ingraham was one of the founders and secretary-treasurer of the Maritime Library Association (1918-28) which continued in 1934 as the Maritime Library Institute (1935-40) and became the Atlantic Provinces Library Association in 1957. She contributed many short articles to the Association Bulletin. Ingraham also was active on the literary front, publishing two volumes of verse, plays, a history of the Baptist Women's Union, and serving as editor for the review journal, "Book Parlance," 1924-29. Upon her retirement she was made Librarian Emeritus.

Comments:

"The best preparation will not make a librarian out of a man or woman who has not innate fitness for the work. No one should seriously consider librarianship as a profession who does not know himself to have in his approach to books the grave, searching attitude of the scholar." M.K. Ingraham (1920)

"Acadia University at Wolfville in the land of Evangeline, with Mrs. Mary K. Ingraham as its 'live librarian,' has been the most active representative of library progress in relation with the Maritime Library Association...." Mary S. Saxe, Library Journal (1927)

"Librarians who had the pleasure of knowing and working with her were charmed and impressed by her personality. She helped us to know one another better through the Bulletin. She gave us

the joy at conventions of hearing minutes and reports—written and read—in her own inimitable style.” Dorothy Cullen (1950)

Sources:

- Shaw, Beatrice M. H. (1924). “Maritime Librarian,” Maclean’s Magazine, 15 Nov., 37: 68-70.
- Beals, Helen D. (1944). “Mrs. Ingraham Retires” Library Journal 69, 1 December, 1961.
- Cullen, Dorothy (1950). “Mrs. Mary Kinley Ingraham 1874-1949,” Bulletin of the Maritime Library Association 14, no. 2: 1-2.
- Elliott, J.H. (1954). “Pioneers! O Pioneers! 4. Mary Kinley Ingraham.” Canadian Library Association Bulletin 10, June, 261.
- Harrison, Tanja. (2012). “The courage to connect: Mary Kinley Ingraham and the development of libraries in the Maritimes.” Library & Information History 28, no. 2: 75-102.
- Bird, Kym (2005). “In the beauty of holiness, from the womb of the morning: allegory, morality, and politics in Mary Kinley Ingraham’s Acadia,” Theatre Research in Canada 26, no. 1-2: 26-55.
- Mary Kinley Ingraham Fonds, Acadia University Archives, Accession No. 1944.0

The [Mary Kinley Ingraham biographic entry](#) in Canada's Early Women Writers provides extensive information on her family and literary career.

Friday, December 02, 2022

Helen Gordon Stewart (1879–1971)



Helen Gordon Stewart was an early, important influential leader in Canadian librarianship, especially in western Canada. She had an ongoing relationship with the Carnegie Corporation of New York which saw her famously promote and administer the formation of the Fraser Valley Library in the early 1930s. As well, she was a recognized expert in regional library development in the southern United States where she taught at the Louisiana State Library School and worked as a consultant in South Carolina. No

less important was her work with the Carnegie Corporation and British Council in Trinidad Tobago. There is an international quality to her accomplishments that is matched only by Toronto's chief librarian, George Herbert Locke in the first half of the 20th century.

I created this bio in 2018 for the Ex Libris Association website. The image is taken from *As We Remember It; Interviews with Pioneering Librarians of British Columbia* (p.16).

Helen Gordon Stewart

Born Dec. 19, 1879, Fletcher (Chatham-Kent) ON; Died April 5, 1971, Vancouver, BC

Education:

????-1908 Teacher training (Central Normal School, Winnipeg,

Manitoba)
1908-1909 Library training diploma (New York Public Library School)
1926 BSc (Teachers College, Columbia University)
1927 AM (Columbia University, Social Science)
1928 PhD (Columbia University, Social Science)

Positions:

????-1908 School teacher in Carman, Manitoba
1909-1910 Children's librarian, New York Public Library
1911-1912 Assistant Librarian, Victoria Public Library
1912-1924 Chief Librarian, Victoria Public Library
1916-1917 Medical war service in London, England, and France
1927-1928 Acting Head, Department of Sociology, Wells College, New York
1930-1934 Director for the Carnegie sponsored Fraser Valley Regional Library Demonstration
1934-1936 Director for the Carnegie British Columbia Public Library extension program
1936-1938 Acting Associate Director and Professor, Graduate School of Library Science, Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge
1939 Consultant, South Carolina large county and unit development
1940-1948 Director, Trinidad and Tobago Central Library Service and British Council regional library development for the British West Indies

Publications:

Stewart, Helen G. (1911). "Cooperation among the libraries of the northwest." In Proceedings of the third annual conference of the Pacific Northwest Library Association, Victoria, British Columbia, September 4, 5, and 6, p. 61-64. Seattle, Wash.: Dearborn Press.
Stewart, Helen G. (1920). "Regional and county libraries." *Public Libraries* 25 (10): 387-388. [synopsis]
Stewart, Helen G. (1927). Adult education and the library. MA thesis, New York: Columbia University. Social Science.
Stewart, Helen Gordon (1934). "A dramatic moment?" *Library*

- Journal 59 (1 April): 306–307.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1934). “Advantages and difficulties in the administration of a regional library unit.” American Library Association Bulletin 28 (9): 604–608.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1934). “Fraser Valley demonstration.” American Library Association Bulletin 28 (9): 637–638.
- Stewart, Helen G. 1934). “Fraser Valley library.” Ontario Library Review 18 (4): 146–149.
- Stewart, Helen Gordon (1934). “Social trends.” Bulletin of the American Library Association 28 (9): 484–489.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1936). “British Columbia and tax-supported regional units.” Bulletin of the American Library Association 30 (8): 692–694. [abridged address]
- Stewart, Helen Gordon (1936). “Uniting a rural region.” Bulletin of the American Library Association 30 (8): 748–750.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1936). “Vote for regional libraries.” Bulletin of the American Library Association 30 (3): 194.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1936). “Regional libraries in British Columbia.” Library Journal 61 (20): 876–878.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1936). “Schools and the regional library.” Bulletin of the American Library Association 30 (10): 927–934.
- Stewart, Helen Gordon (1936). “What regionalism means.” In Papers and proceedings of the Southwestern Library Association, eighth biennial meeting, October 21, 22, 23, 24, 1936, Houston, Texas, p. 59–65. Houston, Texas: [The Association].
- Stewart, Helen Gordon (1937). “Regional library development.” In Library trends; papers presented before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago, August 3–15, 1936, ed. by Louis R. Wilson, p. 87–104. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Stewart, Helen G. (1940). “Regions in perspective.” American Library Association Bulletin 34 (2): 95–96, 147–148.
- Stewart Helen G. (1949). “The regional library of the eastern Caribbean.” Pacific Northwest Library Quarterly 14 (1): 27–30.

Associations/Committees:

1917-1919 and 1932 President, British Columbia Library Association

1919-1922 Member, British Columbia Public Library Commission

1920-1921 President, Pacific Northwest Library Association

Accomplishments:

When she was approaching the age of ninety, Helen Gordon Stewart was asked about using a power mower to cut her lawn. “I supply the power” she responded, a statement that sums up her entire career. She was a dynamic factor in British Columbia for three decades: the 1919 Public Libraries Act, formation of the Public Library Commission, as well as regional and union library systems were very much the results of her hard work. She was the second woman to hold the presidency of a library association in Canada, being nominated in September 1917 only a few months after Mary Black in Ontario. In the late 1920s, she furthered her education by working her way through university while acquiring a doctorate in sociology at Columbia.

Subsequently, the Carnegie Corporation (New York) and British Columbia Public Library Commission selected her to head a successful project in the Fraser Valley region. After she ‘retired’ to Saanich near Victoria at the outset of the Second World War to do volunteer war work, she was enticed by the Carnegie Corporation to repeat her earlier regional successes in the Caribbean islands of the British West Indies, especially Trinidad and Tobago. Because most of her work was completed by the end of the Second World War, she is truly recognized as a pioneer whose accomplishments in Canadian librarianship laid the foundation for others to build upon.

Honours:

1954 Honourary member of Pacific Northwest Library Association

1963 Honourary member of the Canadian Library Association
The British Columbia Library Association adjudicates the Helen Gordon Stewart Award. This award recognizes an outstanding career in librarianship involving achievements that brings honour to the entire profession. It also confers Honourary Life Membership in the BCLA.

Comments:

Howard Overend summarized Dr. Gordon’s career by stating:

“Her work was a seminal force in the ruralisation of public library service in Canada and abroad, showing that a large tax-supported unit of service (a single purpose authority) was the most effective way to serve the library needs of people in several autonomous communities at the lowest cost.”

Sources:

Morrison, Charles Keith. (1950). “Helen Gordon Stewart, library pioneer.” *Food for Thought* 9 (6): 11–16 and 20.

“B.C. Woman pioneered libraries in many lands.” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, April 9, 1960: 10.

Gilroy, Marion and Sam Rothstein, eds. (1970). *As we remember it; Interviews with pioneering librarians of British Columbia*, p. 16–48. Vancouver: University of British Columbia School of Librarianship.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

B. Mabel Dunham (1881–1957)



Along with Mary Black, Mabel Dunham, the chief librarian at Kitchener (previously Berlin) from 1908–44, is notable for assuming a leadership role in Ontario's public libraries shortly after the First World War. After graduating with a BA in 1908 from Victoria College in Toronto, she trained at the recently formed summer library school at McGill

University under the direction of Charles Gould, who was also serving as the president of the American Library Association in 1908–09. Mabel Dunham was the second female president of the Ontario Library Association in 1920–21. My earlier blog post this year covered her presidential address. Throughout her career she expanded services in Kitchener, notably for children's programming.

I originally posted this biographical synopsis of Mabel Dunham for the Ex Libris Association several years ago in 2016. The post also continues on the current ELA website. The image is taken from the *The Ontario Library Association: An Historical Sketch 1900–1925* (p. 106).

Bertha Mabel Dunham

Born May 29, 1881, Minto Twp. (near Harriston), ON. Died June 21, 1957, Kitchener, ON

Education:

1908 BA (Victoria College, University of Toronto)

1908 McGill University summer school for librarians

Positions:

1898–1904 Elementary teacher, Berlin Model School (now Suddaby Public School)

1908–1944 Chief Librarian, Kitchener Public Library

1911–1912 and 1914 Chief instructor at Ontario Department of Education training course for librarianship

Publications:

Dunham, B. Mabel (1910). “Leaves from the diary of a librarian.” *Acta Victoriana* 33: 270–276.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1910). “Methods of reaching the people.” *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 68–76.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1912). “The Ontario Library Summer School, 1911.” *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 63–66.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1915). “The library and the school.” *The School: a Magazine Devoted to Elementary and Secondary Education* 4, no. 2: 118–120.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1917). “What is the place and use of newspapers and periodicals in our public libraries in towns.” *Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting*: 68–76.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1918). “William Wilfred Campbell, 1861–1918: An appreciation.” *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report* 6: 44–47.

Dunham, B. Mabel (Jan. 1924). “Some ‘plain’ people of Canada.” *Canadian Magazine* 62: 188–195.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1927). “The public school and the public library.” *Proceedings of the Ontario Educational Association Annual Meeting held at Toronto, 18th–21st April, 1927*: 66–76.

Dunham, B. Mabel (1934). “Kitchener (Berlin) Public Library

- [history].” Typescript.
- Dunham B. Mabel (1937). “Co-operation in the libraries of Waterloo County.” *Ontario Library Review* 21, no. 3: 120–122.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1938). “Waterloo County’s library scheme.” *Ontario Library Review* 22, no. 3: 197–199.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1945). “The Mid-European backgrounds of Waterloo County.” *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records* 37: 59–70.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1945). “The story of Conestoga.” *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report* 33: 16–23.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1948). “The Pequegnat family.” *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report* 36: 50–55.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1950). “Beginnings in Ontario.” *Mennonite Life* 5, no. 4: 14–16.

Literary works:

- Dunham, B. Mabel (1924). *The trail of the Conestoga*. Toronto: Macmillan.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1927). *Toward Sodom*. Toronto: Macmillan.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1931). *The trail of the king’s men*. Toronto: Ryerson Press.
- Dunham, B. Mabel, ed. (1941). *So great a heritage: historical narrative of Trinity United Church, 1841–1941*. Kitchener: Trinity United Church.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1945). *Grand River*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Dunham, B. Mabel (1948). *Kristli’s trees*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Associations/Committees:

- 1920–1921 President, Ontario Library Association
1922–1924 President, K-W University Women’s Club (also 1932–1934)
1947–50 President, Waterloo Historical Society

Honours:

- 1947 DLitt, University of Western Ontario
1948 Book of the Year Medal for “Kristil’s Trees” awarded by Canadian Association of Children’s Librarians

1953, the City of Kitchener declared her birthday to be ‘B. Mabel Dunham Day’ in tribute to all her contributions to the city.

The Kitchener-Waterloo Federation of University Women administers the Dr. B. Mabel Dunham Award for female high school graduates.

Dunham is inducted as a member of the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame.

Accomplishments:

Mabel Dunham was the first trained chief librarian appointed to lead an Ontario public library. She was the third woman to be president of a provincial library association in Canada. She was the first woman to serve on a public board in Kitchener, being twice elected to the public school board. She was one of the early leaders in efforts to train and educate librarians in Ontario before World War I. She helped organize systematic cooperation to distribute books throughout Waterloo County in the late 1930s prior to the formation of a county library service. She was one of the founders of Kitchener’s Women’s Canadian Club (later president); president (and founder) of the Waterloo Historical Society; and a founder of the K-W Business and Professional Women’s Club.

Dunham wrote five books depicting the history and heritage of her region. Her first novels, “Trail of the Conestoga” and “Toward Sodom,” described the migration of the Mennonites to the K-W area centered in Berlin (now Kitchener). The “Trail of the King’s Men” recounted the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists from the United States. The “Grand River” was an exploration of a river and its surrounding countryside. “Kristli’s Trees” was an enjoyable story of a Mennonite boy and his family on a small farm illustrated by Selwyn Dewdney.

Although Dunham made no major contribution to librarianship on a national scale, she greatly influenced its development on a local scale through the force of her personality as well as making a noteworthy literary contribution to regional historical fiction.

Sources:

Kitchener Public Library holds information on Dunham and

there are library board minutes for her tenure. The Ontario Archives has some speeches and correspondence as part of the Ontario Library Association records.

Banting, Constance (1928). “Mabel Dunham.” Ontario Library Review 12, no. 2: 66.

“Honour to Whom Honour is Due” (1953). Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report 41: 7–8.

Snider, Lillian (Aug. 1954). “Miss Mabel Dunham.” Ontario Library Review 38, no. 3: 221–24.

Shoemaker, Dorothy and Grace Schmidt (1989). “Dr. B. Mabel Dunham (1881–1957).” Ex Libris News no. 5: 5–7.

Taylor, Ryan (1981). “Mabel Dunham’s Centenary.” Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report 69: 13–25 [extensive bibliography].

Also, [my earlier post on Mabel Dunham's address](#) about librarianship as a profession for women to the Ontario Library Association in 1921.

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Mary J.L. Black (1879–1939)



Earlier this year I posted comments and excerpts from Mary Black's presidential address at the Ontario Library Association in 1918. Mary Black was the first female president of a library association in Canada. As background for her career, I am adding a biographical piece that provides basic facts about her library career. I composed this biography for the Ex Libris Association in 2016 and it also appears on this association's website.

The image above is taken from the 1908 Papers of the Thunder Bay Historical Society (p. 6) of which she was a long-standing member of the executive.

Mary Black was an inspirational force for improved library service to everyone in the old city of Fort William and its environs (today Thunder Bay). Service for people was her mantra. She was active in community and library and organizations, including the American Library Association extension services. In a time before national and provincial library associations formed across Canada, she was a progressive, regional force for librarianship, even in the gloomy years of the Great Depression.

Mary Johanna Louisa Black

Born Apr. 1, 1879, Uxbridge, ON. Died Jan. 4, 1939,
Vancouver, BC

Education:

Received informal 'homeschooling' in her youth
Attended (but did not complete) the first Ontario Department of Education one-month summer training course for librarianship at Toronto in June 1911

Positions:

1909–1937 Chief Librarian, Fort William Public Library
1917 Lecturer, Department of Education two-month training course in librarianship

Publications:

- Black, Mary (1911/1912). "Our public library." Papers and Annual Reports of the Thunder Bay Historical Society 3: 6–7.
- Black, Mary (1913). "Books for girls." Proceedings of the Ontario Library Association Annual Meeting: 74–79.
- Black, Mary (1915). "Town survey in theory and practice." Proceedings of the OLA Annual Meeting: 72–80.
- Black, Mary (1916). "The library and the girl." Ontario Library Review 1: 8–9.
- Black, Mary (1917). "What seems to me an important aspect of the work of public libraries at the present time." Proceedings of the OLA Annual Meeting: 30–34.
- Black, Mary (1918). "Concerning some popular fallacies." Proceedings of the OLA Annual Meeting: 52–58 (OLA Presidential Address.)
- Black, Mary (1918). "Walks and talks with Wilfred Campbell." Ontario Library Review 3: 30–31.
- Black, Mary (1919). "Twentieth century librarianship." Canadian Bookman n.s.1: 58–59.
- Black, Mary (1920). "New library legislation in Ontario." Canadian Bookman n. s. 2:18–19.
- Black, Mary (1921). "Tales through the ages from the banks of the Kaministiquia." Papers and Annual Reports of the Thunder Bay Historical Society 16–12: 8–10.
- Black, Mary (1924). "Early history of the Fort William Public

- Library.” Papers and Annual Reports of the Thunder Bay Historical Society 16–17: 12–21.
- Black, Mary (1924). “Place names in the vicinity of Fort William.” Papers and Annual Reports of the Thunder Historical Society 16–17: 12–21.
- Black, Mary (1927). “Canadian library extension meeting”. Proceedings and transactions of the American Library Association, 49th Meeting: 338–340.
- Black, Mary. (1928). “Adult education.” Proceedings of the OLA Annual Meeting: 61–64.
- Black, Mary (1931). “Ontario libraries.” Ontario Library Review 15:132–138.
- Black, Mary (1933). “Publicity for the older books.” Ontario Library Review 17: 5–6.
- Black, Mary (1934). “Fort William, Ontario, Public Library.” Library Journal 59: 510–511.
- Black, Mary (1935). “Ideal librarian.” Ontario Library Review 19: 125–126.
- Ridington, John, Mary J. L. Black and George H. Locke (1933). Libraries in Canada: a study of library conditions and needs. Toronto: Ryerson Press and Chicago ALA.

Associations/Committees:

- 1917–1918 President, Ontario Library Association
- 1926–1934 American Library Association, member of Extension Board
- 1933–1934 American Library Association, chair, Small Libraries Round Table
- 1934–1937 Canadian Library Council, executive member (ex-officio)
- 1913–1928 Secretary-Treasurer, Thunder Bay Historical Society
- 1929–1932 President, Thunder Bay Historical Society
- 1916–1918 President, Fort William Women's Canadian Club

Honours:

The Mary J.L. Black Branch library, opened in 1938, was named in her honour. It was recently renovated for the second time in 2010 by the Thunder Bay Public Library at a cost of \$4 million.

It is one of the handful of Canadian libraries constructed during the Great Depression to continue in operation.

Accomplishments:

Mary J.L. Black believed the mission of the public library was essentially utilitarian – to provide the right book to the right reader at the least cost. Her “ideal librarian” was one who held the spirit of public service and knowledge of people alongside the love of books. Libraries should reach out to every citizen and in this regard her work with the non-English speaking immigrant population was particularly noteworthy. Her personal town survey in 1915 to identify library needs exemplified her approach to library service. On a national scale, her work as a member of the Commission of Enquiry, funded by the Carnegie Corporation and conducted in 1930, remains a lasting contribution to Canadian librarianship. In her home city, she was active in local service groups, promotion of history and local political and educational life. The poet, William Wilfred Campbell, was her cousin. She was the first woman to be president of a library association in Canada.

Sources:

Thunder Bay Public Library holds annual reports by Black and there are library board minutes for her tenure. The ALA Archives holds records of her activities and the Carnegie Corporation New York has information on her work on the 1930 Commission.

[Carson, William O.] (1917). “The librarian and library of Fort William.” Ontario Library Review 1: 92–95.

MacBeth, Madge (1918). “A bookish person.” Canadian Magazine 51: 518–520.

“Miss Mary J.L. Black is interviewed by Globe.” Toronto Globe June 18, 1927: 15.

Kirker, Ena. (1927). “The woman who put charm into a public library.” Canadian Magazine 68: 32, 41.

Abbott, Brook (1931). “An accidental librarian: Mary Black of Fort William, Ont.” Canadian Magazine 76: 18, 29.

“Mary J.L. Black dies in Vancouver.” Ontario Library Review

- 23 (Feb. 1939): 5–7.
- Morrison, Ken (1994). “Mary J.L. Black of Fort William library.” Epilogue; Canadian Bulletin for the History of Books, Libraries and Archives 9, no 1: 13–22.
- Scollie, Frederick Brent. “Black, Mary Johanna Louisa.” In: *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16.
- Giles, Suzette (2015). “Libraries named after librarians.” ELAN no. 57 (Spring): 6–7.

My earlier blog on [Mary Black's presidential speech](#) is also available.

Monday, August 15, 2022

Ontario Public Libraries: The Provincial Role in a Triad of Responsibilities, 1982

Ontario Public Libraries: The Provincial Role in a Triad of Responsibilities. The Report of the Ontario Public Libraries Programme Review for the Minister of Citizenship and Culture. Toronto: Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, 1982. Executive Co-Ordinator, Peter J. Bassnett. Tables and appendices; xxxiii, 318 pp.

In September 1980, Ontario's Minister of Culture and Recreation (MCR), Reuben Baetz, met with the Ontario Public Library Council (OPLC) to announce a two-year Public Libraries Programme Review (OPLPR). Scarborough's chief librarian, Peter Bassnett, would be the director and work with a small intermediary group at the outset to plan the review process. Since 1975 he had been chief librarian at Scarborough. Before this appointment, he had managed systems at North York and worked in the UK for many years. The Minister believed a positive approach with abundant consultation would improve the delivery of library services throughout Ontario. The 1970s had been a time of controversy about the role of regional library services, the accountability of library boards, disputes with municipal authorities, the funding provided for libraries by the provincial government, and dissenting viewpoints about policies for future planning. A previous report on provincial libraries by Albert Bowron in 1975 had produced much discussion but no significant legislative changes. Revised public library legislation was the major objective because the older statute, enacted in 1966, had not proved to be as effective as originally expected.

The OPLPR established fifteen groups in search of consensus and solutions for many contentious issues. Some groups explored general provincial concerns: policy and social purpose (1), general delivery of services (2), governmental liaison (3), provincial financing and accountability (4), and field services

(5). Task groups on planning and development for technological potential (6), electronic information (13), and co-operatives and processing centres (15) addressed technical and networking questions. Special considerations for northern Ontario (7), publishing and libraries (12), and access to resources (14) required separate groups. Finally, four groups studied cultural identities and services for French languages (8), Native services (9), multicultural programs (10), and disabled persons (11). Each group was responsible for a report to Peter Bassnett, who was charged with publishing a final report. In addition, Bassnett held 20 open sessions for discussion and received 368 briefs encompassing a wide variety of issues.

The OPLPR sets its course for a year-and-a-half with the knowledge that the Progressive Conservatives under William Davis had finally secured a majority government in a March 1981 election. Four years would be sufficient to develop new legislation for libraries. The OPLPR submitted seventy-five recommendations by August 1982. By then, there was a new Minister, Bruce McCaffrey, in charge, and, earlier in the year, in February 1982, the MCR had become the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, with its Library and Community (MCZC) Information Branch relocated in the Arts, Heritage and Libraries division.

The OPLPR report, *Ontario Public Libraries: The Provincial Role in a Triad of Responsibilities*, was issued, mostly in microfiche to the consternation of many, by autumn 1982 for review by library boards, politicians, and librarians. The Bassnett report made clear-cut statements that cut across the entire spectrum of public library services. It found that the current provincial role performed by the LCIB or OPLC was deficient (p. 68–71). The Report indicated more specific legislation and guidelines were required (p. 93). Lack of awareness about the LCIB and OPLC and their inadequate authority had stalled communication and led to ineffectual provincial leadership. A strengthening of provincial direction within the Ministry through an enlarged staff component to plan and liaise with the library community was essential. A Public Library Services Division

and a new advisory body would be required (rec. 7.72 and 7.73). Other recommendations for increased staff for data collection, French-language service, networking, services for disabled persons, aboriginal services, multicultural activity, management, and training responsibilities (p. 168–187) would permit the MCZC to deal with policies that it brought forward. Some ideas originated from background studies or were influenced by general developments such as the 1981 United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons theme ‘Full Participation and Equality.’ Assistance for non-professional staff, mostly untrained persons in charge of small libraries, was an important issue, the subject of one lengthy submission from an ad hoc group of consultants. In one case, the Task Force on Native Services, the main thrust urging the formation of a Council to oversee library services for natives at an estimated \$290,000, was disregarded because the group insisted on working outside the framework of the LCIB. The OPLPR’s recommendations on northern Ontario conditions mostly bypassed the ideas from Task group 15 headed by Richard Jones, director of North Central region.



Library Regions after 1984

During the Programme Review, the regional role—now retitled the intermediary role—was gradually reshaped. A Network Development Office was transferred to the Ministry offices in July 1981 and some LCIB staff worked on a provincial study of union products for resource sharing in regional systems. The OPLPR was wary of multiple regional processing centres and bibliographic databanks. Task force 15 had recommended the Midwestern Region centre become a Crown Corporation. Instead, the OPLPR (p. 164–167) followed

the Ministry's internal report that recommended further study of Midwestern's possibilities. A new path was clarified: automation and cooperative area networks were to become local level responsibilities supplemented with planning and financial assistance offered by the Province. Centralized regional acquisitions and processing utilities would no longer receive support. The Programme Review recommended intermediary involvement with basic services, such as rotating book collections, staff training, special collections, reference centres, programming for groups, and direct service to municipally unorganized populations. Some briefs authored by administrative groups emphasized long-standing issues such as resource libraries and centralized processing, but these positions were not conclusive. The key point was the Review's statement that the intermediary role "is an extension of the Provincial Government's responsibility and role in the delivery of public library services across Ontario" and that there were currently three types of regional service, "the northern, southern, and Metropolitan Toronto area" (p. 147–148). Northern distinctions warranted more proactive provincial library intermediaries. The southern systems were more complex, so the Review recommended a gradual phase-in over five years to one provincial agency with field offices, starting with Southwestern, Lake Erie, and Niagara (p.154–159). Metro Toronto required amendments to the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act to repeal the Metro Library Board's status as a regional library system and to authorize more sitting Metro Council members for the upper-level board. Provincial funding for the Metro Board would need an examination to determine what special purposes the province wanted to accomplish with its legislative payments (p. 160–164).

At the local level, the OPLPR made forty-two recommendations clarifying functions and management. Several recommendations would eventually make their way into the revised Library Act almost three years later in 1985. In place of standards, boards should embark on community analysis; boards should provide services their communities desired or needed; legislation for free entry to libraries and use of materials should be enacted; and

services for particular groups (e.g., the disabled and Francophones) should be augmented with provincial assistance. Capital funds should be made available because only a few libraries had shared in the brief Wintario capital construction program in the late 1970s before the government redirected it to other purposes. Funding from programs such as Wintario and the Board of Industrial Leadership was important but episodic. Special funding for the creation of county-regional municipal systems and enrichment of per capita grants to northern libraries was a desideratum. Some recommendations addressed the composition of boards and their relationship with appointing bodies by affording municipal councils more control. The century-old traditional board of nine members, with the majority composed of public and separate school appointees from larger county school boards, was a leftover from the 1960s restructuring of school authorities. Now, municipal councils should make all the appointments (p. 116). In summarizing the provincial conditional grant to libraries, the Review found little change over ten years: the 1971 grant had totalled \$8,552 million (20% of total support), and in 1981, \$25,279 million (19% of total support). The Bassnett report recommended continuing payment of annual grants directly to boards. On the issue of non-operating boards, currently in 136 communities, the Report recommended the grant be paid only if municipal revenue matched its grant (p. 132–135). This policy, along with the promotion of larger units of service in counties and upper-tier municipalities, had the potential to halve the total number of boards.

The Bassnett report concluded by drafting a policy statement regarding public library service (p. 188–192). Ultimately, provincial goals should be:

- provision of public library legislation ensuring access and delivery of services;
- encouragement and support for municipal libraries;
- ensuring library collections reflect the population characteristics of their jurisdictions;
- encouragement and assistance for technological changes;
- development of a province-wide public information utility by

networking municipal libraries; and

- provision of funding and staff support to achieve these goals.

The cost of expanding provincial support was not expensive: Task Group 4 estimated a 10.5% increase from \$25.7 million to \$28.5 million (p. 194). At the former regional levels, expenses could be reduced by 40 percent and be redirected to augment the proposed public library service division. In terms of the Public Libraries Act, the OPLPR recommended a complete overhaul. In response to the OPLPR, Bruce McCaffrey announced at the November 1982 Ontario Library Association conference in Toronto that his Ministry preferred to issue a ‘green paper’ for more discussion without any specific commitment to action, *A Foundation for the Future/Réalités et Perspectives*. This ‘green paper,’ released in December 1982, would form the basis for legislative changes. In February 1983, Wil Vanderelst, from the MCZC policy secretariat, became the new director of the LCIB, now shifted to the Ministry’s Culture and Regional Services Division. While the *Ontario Public Libraries* report had sought consensus on many issues, in fact, its author, Peter Bassnett, expressed dissatisfaction with the ‘green paper’ in the *Toronto Star* in May 1983. He felt many of his recommendations had been passed over or modified. Such was the fate of many recommendations in the OPLPR: finding consensus in the library community was an uncommonly difficult task.

There were, however, positive outcomes of the OPLPR. Municipal councils gained more control over library board appointments, thus ending a decade-long struggle. Free access to a variety materials became an important feature of new legislation enacted in 1985. The Province reiterated its support for conditional grants paid directly to library boards. The conflict and confusion about regional library boards was reduced when the province took control of southern and northern ‘intermediary’ services and began to deliver targeted policies, such as Francophone concerns, disabled programs, and improved service to indigenous communities. The review, which appeared at the same time when ‘turnkey systems’ were beginning to provide integrated solutions for library functions, proposed

extensive automation projects be supported by provincial studies (p. 166). The idea of equalization of services addressed on large geographic scale came firmly into play. In fact, after almost four decades, very few changes have been made to the original 1984–85 legislation; again, one of the accomplishments that may be traced to the Bassnett report.

My blog on the 1975 report by Albert Bowron, *The Ontario Public Library: Review and Reorganization*, is [at this link](#).

Sunday, August 07, 2022

Libraries of Metropolitan Toronto (1960) by Ralph Shaw

Libraries of Metropolitan Toronto: A Study of Library Service Prepared for the Library Trustees' Council of Toronto and District. By Ralph Robert Shaw. Toronto: Library Trustees' Council of Toronto and District, 1960. Illustrated, pp. 98.

In the late 1950s, there were thirteen library boards serving the metropolitan area of Toronto. One board, Toronto, served 658,000 people. Twelve adjacent boards served 742,000. More centralized regional service for police and other area concerns had formed after the creation of a Metropolitan government in 1953 through a provincial act. A few years later, in November 1958, the Metro Council authorized a group of trustees, the Council of Library Trustees of Toronto and District, first formed in 1954, to prepare a detailed survey of the thirteen area municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto. The Council believed systematic coordination was the most logical way to achieve satisfactory area-wide service. The trustees, led by Richard Stanbury from the township of North York, chose Dr. Ralph Shaw, Rutgers University, New Jersey, to bring American-style library planning to Ontario. He began his work in 1959 and published his report in the following year in May.

Dr. Shaw's report did two significant things: it set a better standard for social science research in Canadian library surveys and, more importantly, revealed the disparity in library service across Metro's thirteen library authorities for books, reference, personnel, and financial support. Shaw made fifteen recommendations to improve integration and standards of service, the principle ones being:

- establishment of a Metropolitan Library Board to coordinate agreed upon activities and report to the Metro Council;
- no amalgamation or consolidation of local boards into a single system;

- funding by a metropolitan board for services necessary for all citizens in the greater region, that is, reference collections and information service;
- provision for centralized cataloguing and card preparation for all libraries operated by the proposed metro board;
- priority for the development of regional branches of 100,000 volumes with specialized staff;
- priority development of neighbourhood branches for children's services and adult recreational and general reading with bookmobile services;
- Toronto Public Library (TPL) to merge its reference and circulation departments into a single department with subject specialization and relocate from College Street to a new building for use by all metro residents; and
- a metro-wide use of a single card for all citizens.

The most important recommendation, a metropolitan board, would prove difficult despite the advice that there should be no amalgamation of local boards.

Dr. Shaw rejected the idea of having TPL serve as a central bibliographic and reference resource for all Ontario. This concept, the heart of a 'Provincial Library' promoted by many librarians and the Ontario Library Association in the 1950s, had proved to be elusive and unattainable over the years. Further, he advised that the administrative separation of TPL's children's services should be discontinued, especially in branches. The management of libraries in schools for students by TPL also was an awkward arrangement. Shaw reported that services for schoolchildren and young adults varied throughout the region and required new delivery approaches. He judged technical services in all libraries to be slower and more expensive than necessary. A metro board would provide this service more effectively.

When the final report came to Metro Council in 1960, Frederick Gardiner, the Metro chair, asked Dr. Shaw how services compared to American cities. The surveyor replied that Metro's demand was "explosive." Later in the year, the Toronto Board of Education appointed Leonard Freiser as chief librarian and

established the Toronto Education Centre to support the goal of equipping schools with their own libraries. A *Globe and Mail* editorial on 11 January 1962 approved: “It must be observed only with surprise that this policy has not been in effect for decades past.”

To implement the Shaw report, Metro Council set up a Special Committee chaired by Richard Stanbury in July 1960. The federated approach of centralized Metro funding for standard services and continuance of local municipal autonomy had merits. However, because some library boards lagged behind general Canadian standards, coordinated development and tax-based financing from Metro councillors were complex issues to overcome. As early as June 8th 1960, the *Toronto Star* had observed: “After reading Dr. Shaw’s report, the immediate reaction of Toronto politicians will be to call for an end to the free-loading of many of the smaller municipalities.” By the autumn of 1960, the Special Committee was receiving briefs, not all supportive of Dr. Shaw’s conclusions, for example, the Metro Separate School Board felt providing libraries in every school was an expensive option.

When Stanbury’s committee reported to Metro Council in July 1961, it proposed the creation of a 30-member Metro-appointed library board, funding for a network of district libraries in Greater Toronto, grants to local library boards to equalize service, and payments for the operation and construction of TPL’s reference library. However, Metro Council balked at providing money without an upper-tier board controlling expenditures. The chair, Frederick Gardiner, declared, “It is either unification of the area library boards or nothing.” When the Special Committee’s effort came forward at Council later in November 1961, its report was adopted with an amendment to form a regional board. Nevertheless, this action had the effect of stalling efforts to create one because there was no unanimity on the issue.

Although the idea of a metro board did not take immediate hold, the Ontario government intervened at this point by appointing H.

Carl Goldenberg to head a review on Toronto municipal governance in June 1963. His Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto received some library briefs in May 1964, primarily from TPL. Goldenberg's final report reaffirmed the need for a Metro library board. It would be composed of nine members—two Metro Council appointees, five members from local area boards, and two from Toronto school boards. The report also concluded that 13 municipalities would be reduced to 6—Toronto, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, York, and East York. The result of this amalgamation process blended six independent libraries into a unique upper-tier regional structure in which trustees looked to the Metro Council, or the potential 'regional' library board, to play the central role in planning and provision of reference services.

The Shaw report was an influential guide to Toronto library development during the first half of the sixties. The creation of a new central reference library, new district library buildings, and the development of school libraries by the boards of education were apparent changes that could be traced to the pages of *Libraries of Metropolitan Toronto*. There was a sense that the concept of a Toronto-centred 'Provincial Library,' as it had existed in the 1950s, was consigned to history.

Later, in the 1970s, when TPL found its neighbourhood branch libraries needed revitalization, it was still wedded to a policy of creating larger district branches, a legacy from the 1960 Shaw report. Also, TPL was more inclined to work on studies about its own system goals, internal management, and local planning projects within city limits. There was more interest in inner-city issues than metro-wide library activities. Nevertheless, despite opposition, a world-class regional reference library opened in 1977. Two decades later, in 1998, the six metro municipalities were amalgamated into one Toronto entity. The evolution of library centralization, first envisaged in the late 1950s when there were thirteen library boards, had finally come about.

LAKES ONTARIO LIBRARIES OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO

— BOUNDARIES OF PROPOSED REGIONAL SERVICE.

#1: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED
REGIONAL LIBRARIES.

#2: EXISTING CAPABLE OF
LIBRARIES BECOMING REGIONAL LIBRARIES.



Monday, July 18, 2022

Ontario's Centennial Libraries, 1966–1967

In 1961 the National Centennial Act established a federal Centennial Commission reporting to Parliament. This Commission intended to celebrate Canada's birthday by planning and assisting projects across the country. Provincial departments helped coordinate finances with local groups and municipalities. In all, the total expenditure under various grant programs for all governments reached \$200 million for about 2,500 projects, including the building of Confederation Memorial Centres, such as the one in Charlottetown which included a library. In Ontario, in 1965, the Department of Tourism established a Centennial Planning Branch to help plan and finance celebrations such as armed forces ceremonials, canoe pageants, the Confederation and train caravans, aboriginal events, sports events, municipal projects, and Queen's Park celebrations. Approved local projects received funding from the federal government normally based on one dollar per capita to a maximum of one-third of the total cost. Provinces usually matched the federal amount, and municipalities funded the balance. Some new regional library co-operatives also provided funds for a few projects, notably Teck Township, where library facilities were the primary focus. Eventually, Ontario municipal projects totalled approximately \$7 million; more than seventy-five libraries qualified for funding in the building category.

About five percent of the total Canadian projects were library-related (144). Ontario communities accounted for slightly more than half of all Canadian library buildings. The most notable project, the Public Archives and National Library, which opened on 20 June 1967, fulfilled a need expressed since the beginning of the century. The Canadian Library Association received \$12,000 to microfilm Canadian newspapers in the Confederation period, 1862–1873; these microfilms were subsequently used across the country in many research projects. In Ontario, few major cities choose to erect or renovate libraries because large buildings were more complex to plan and finance during the

Commission's short lifespan. In Canada, Edmonton's towering \$4,000,000 centennial central library was a remarkable example of municipal funding for library services.

Sault Ste. Marie Centennial Library, 1967



In Ontario, only Sault Ste. Marie (\$776,000), Chatham (\$515,000), and Mimico (\$300,000) were expensively conceived projects. The Sault Ste. Marie library's lower level included space for a

"Centennial Room" for lectures and exhibits. The vast majority of libraries were projected to be under \$100,000 due to the per capita funding formula. Smaller municipalities sometimes entered into joint projects with their neighbours to combine their financial resources. One municipality, suburban Toronto Township, built three smaller libraries (3,000 sq. ft. each) that opened on the same day in October 1967—Malton, Lakeview, and Clarkson-Lorne Park.



Mimico Centennial Library, 1966

The Centennial Commission was not concerned with library architectural features or functional requirements of libraries. By now, the excesses of the Carnegie era were well known: some communities—Cornwall (1956), Sarnia (1960), and Guelph

(1964)—had simply demolished their buildings and rebuilt without regard to heritage considerations. Chatham, opened on 15 November 1967, followed the same process, moving to the

Thames Theatre Art Gallery while demolition of the Carnegie proceeded. Sault Ste. Marie also razed its Carnegie building to make way for Sixties-style progress.

In keeping with the limited funds available on a per capita basis, the general architectural style of the vast majority of smaller Centennial libraries might be described as “commercial-vernacular” with the following usual characteristics:

- most new buildings were 4,000 – 8,000 sq. ft. in size and based on a simple rectangular or box plan, sometimes allowing for future expansion;
- modernist style exteriors were rectilinear in form with plain surfaces, featuring extensive use of glass, and horizontal roof lines;
- buildings had approachable “street-level” entrances often with adjoining parking;
- interior “open plan” mix of stacking, fluorescent lightening, and public space provided more convenient, individual study areas, larger lounge areas for reading, and improved interface with staff and book collections;
- structural elements featured concrete, glass, and steel that revealed skeleton-frame structure;
- lighting took on more importance with visible fluorescent and long, metal window mullions providing strength in single-storey buildings and allowing more interior daylight to make study and programming pleasant for users;
- in larger libraries, modular column squares made load-bearing and functionality simpler to plan for future redesign needs;
- use of vernacular, localized style combined with contemporary wood-steel furnishings created attractive, simplified library spaces.

The majority of Centennial libraries and extensions did not continue the monumental traditional style of the Carnegie era. Instead, the ideal, “form follows function,” was adhered to even if contemporary additions clashed dramatically with the older Carnegie style, as in Fort Frances. Many additions simply alleviated space problems, thereby limiting their scope and style. Renovated buildings, such as a service station at Sioux Lookout, did not present opportunities for architectural statements.

Streetsville Centennial Library, 1967



The architectural qualities of Centennial libraries differed tremendously. Because of their size and community

location Centennial libraries escaped the major elements of the Brutalist style, so evident in Ontario's 1969 Centennial Museum of Science and Technology. One library, Mimico, opened in November 1966, received a Massey Medal for Architecture for its architect, Philip R. Brook. It was a spacious 18,000 sq. ft. building with a capacity of 60,000 books and an auditorium for 250 people. Streetsville, opened in November 1967 by the Premier, William Davis, reflected a contemporary cubic style with a capacity for 20,000 volumes within 6,500 sq. ft. Larger libraries, such as Oakville, formed part of a civic complex and combined with art gallery space to satisfy municipal needs. The complex was on three levels: a lower area for technical services, main floor children's library, and upper level (actually at street level) included adult services and the art gallery.



Some structures were built with an eye for successful extensions, such as Fort Erie. Others, such as Nepean Township's modular octagon at Bells Corners (at left), were too small at just

under 2,000 sq. ft. to cope with population growth. Nepean was required to add later modular additions in 1970 and 1974. A few county library systems built better accommodations. The Middlesex library included a local branch for Arva residents as well as storage and garage to organize transport of books to other

county branches via bookmobile—there was 14,000 sq. ft. on one level. Several, notably Cornwall's Centennial Simon Fraser wing, opened by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in July 1967, were successful additions to existing buildings.

Very little critical study of Centennial library building projects exists, Bracebridge being a noteworthy exception. Its 1908 Carnegie, of course, suffered space constraints before the trustees and town council decided to renovate the basement for a children's library and add a small extension for a separate entrance. The project cost was just less than \$20,000; it included renovation upgrades in the main building and a "centennial wing" which was really "just a concrete-block bunker" that blemished the heritage aspects of the original Carnegie design. Nonetheless, speeches at an official ceremony on 13 May 1967 deemed the town's decision to be a wise investment in children's education.

Indeed, the Centennial helped enhance the library's public image about an expanded range of services, for example, auditoriums for programs, meetings, and performances; exhibit areas for art; and accommodation for audio-visual departments. These advantages reinforced the library's position as an educational and recreational locus for community activity. Improved library facilities were part of a rapid increase in library usage across Ontario: in 1961 libraries served approx. 4.4 million and by 1971 6.9 million, a 56% increase — the greatest single decade increase in Ontario library history. Across the province, Centennial libraries were a visible symbol of local pride, the growth of Canadian identity, the democratization of culture, and the utility of shared federal-provincial programs for the public benefit. In some ways, Centennial libraries emulated the local self-help philosophy and enthusiasm for library building inspired by Andrew Carnegie six decades previously without the need to venture beyond national boundaries for funding.

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

Libraries: Past, Present, Future. An address by Marshall McLuhan, 1970

Libraries: Past, Present, Future. An Address delivered by Marshall McLuhan at the Geneseo State College Library School, New York State, on July 3, 1970 for the 13th annual Mary C. Richardson lectures series. Typescript, 32 leaves.

From the mid-1960s into the 1970s, Marshall McLuhan was sought out as a speaker across North America. The media theorist had coined the famous expression “the medium is the message,” categorized media as “hot” or “cool,” and spoke of an interconnected world as a “global village.” His ideas were controversial and often expressed in a somewhat ambiguous or aphoristic style. One of his messages about the dominance in contemporary society of electronic media, especially television, to the detriment of printed books and newspapers, gave many librarians cause for concern about the future of libraries and traditional print media. Canada’s National Librarian, W.K. Lamb, refused to believe that the book was becoming obsolete. In an interview, he held that the books could be reproduced using computerized telecommunications and that libraries would use computing to automate catalogues to make books available for loan (*Ottawa Citizen*, 17 June 1967). Daniel Gore, in a November 1970 issue of *American Libraries*, said, “McLuhan is merely a recent example of the learned man who despises books; the phenomenon itself is ancient.” Robert B. Downs, in his *Books That Changed America*, published by Macmillan in 1970, completely rejected McLuhan assertions on the declining fortune of print: “Denigrators of books, such as Marshall McLuhan, would have us believe that books are obsolescent, being rapidly superseded by the newer media. Thus they would hold that books have had their day—possibly significant and influential in earlier eras, but now on the way to becoming museum pieces” by citing the societal impact of popular authors Rachel Carson and Ralph Nader.

Mary Richardson, c.1933



Yet, McLuhan's use of the hot-button word "obsolete" pointed more to the trend that printed media were less ascendant and subject to changing technology rather than non-usage and extinction. He made this point in his address at the School of Library Science at the State University College of New York College in Geneseo in July 1970. Geneseo was a liberal arts college which had conferred American Library Association fully-accredited library degrees since the Second World War. The special occasion was the thirteen annual Mary C. Richardson Lecture, named in honour of a former departmental director who had a special interest in school libraries. Dr. Richardson was Librarian and Head of the Geneseo Library Education Department from 1917–1941. McLuhan clarified his remarks about obsolescence briefly:

I have been saying that the book and printing are obsolete for some years. Many people interpret this to mean that printing and the book are about to disappear. Obsolescence, in fact, means the exact opposite. It means that a service has become so pervasive that it permeates every area of a culture like the vernacular itself. Obsolescence, in short, ensures total acceptance and every wider use. (28)

McLuhan's use of obsolescence on a broader scale referred to traditional media adapting to technological change by changing their form or usage. Henry Campbell, the chief librarian at Toronto Public Library, picked up on this point when McLuhan's fame was accelerating. Writing in the May 1965 issue of the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, he posed the question: "Some of us in Canada are asking: Are libraries hot or cool? Is there a place for libraries in an electronic culture, one of simultaneity, or are they by their very nature trapped in a linear

and nonsensory mold that spells their doom?" Campbell did not answer, but he suggested librarians must raise questions about knowledge in all its aspects to know more about librarianship as a profession.

The Geneseo talk to students and faculty concentrated on the history and current state of libraries in a wide-ranging McLuhanesque fashion. He linked the history of libraries to different eras of media formats—ancient clay tablets and scrolls, medieval codices and manuscripts, the Gutenberg print revolution that enabled rapid knowledge sharing, and the 20th-century electronic environment. As McLuhan saw it, "One of the revolutionary effects of Gutenberg for libraries was that the printed book was both portable and expendable. Uniform and repetitive or mass produced commodities had their beginning with the printed book. The Gutenberg technology of union, moveable types became the pattern and exemplar for all subsequent forms of mass production." (22) Libraries of all types in the modern sense, he believed, began to flourish with the mass-produced book with an emphasis on the problems of storage and systems of book classification (23). Now, "the paperless, or software library, brings the Gutenberg assembly line of movable types into an altogether new circle of magical effects." (26) These effects, the new speed of electronic transmission applied to the traditional book, would result in its "strange alternation of use and function. (28) Further,

With the multitude of new forms of photography and reprography, the diversities of utterance and self-outering [sic] have come into being. On the one hand, pictures supplant a great deal of verbal expression and, on the other hand, the verbal acquires an extraordinary new range of resonance and implications. (31)

McLuhan was less prescriptive about the future of the libraries. To be sure, libraries would continue to exist, but the effects of the all-pervasive electronic world would lead to the release of unknown intents or controls, like the trends and processes unknowingly released by Gutenberg more than five centuries

before. McLuhan was forecasting the influence of powerful global media that would erode geographic boundaries and cultural insularity. At Geneseo, he hinted that libraries would continue to connect authors with readers just as they had in the small departmental English library he had used as an undergraduate at Cambridge many years before.

Further Reading:

Parts of the McLuhan 1970 address are incorporated in R.K. Logan and M. McLuhan, *The Future of the Library: From Electric Media to Digital Media* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016). This book reproduces and supplements an unpublished manuscript dating to 1979 that McLuhan and Logan co-authored.

An earlier talk by Marshall McLuhan to Ontario librarians is the subject of one of [my earlier blogs](#).

Monday, May 23, 2022

Intellectual Freedom Statement Adopted by the Canadian Library Association in June 1966

Although the Canadian Library Association-Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques did not adopt an intellectual freedom statement until 1966, its development had a long genesis. As early as 1951, at its Toronto conference, the Ontario Library Association requested CLA-ACB to develop a statement on a “Library Bill of Rights,” i.e., a national library policy on intellectual freedom similar to the American Library Association’s statement revised in 1948. As a result, the CLA-ACB appointed a special committee to explore a “Library Charter” chaired by Gerhard Lomer (McGill University). Over two years, the committee worked on a statement in three sections: the rights of the Canadian people, the services and responsibilities of libraries, and the duties of the government. However, the committee was discharged in 1953, perhaps because CLA-ACB chose a reactive “watch and ward” position focused on its Undesirable Literature Committee (est. 1950).

Yet, this latter committee did not attempt to draft a policy, although it did submit a 1953 brief to a Senate committee concerning indecent publications that declared censorship could be problematic. For many years, meetings and conferences of CLA-ACB mostly dealt with “bread and butter” issues, such as salary standards for employees, standards of service for public libraries, or the development of a projected national survey on the state of libraries. The welfare of librarians and libraries, not issues of national or public policy, was the prime interest of the membership.

The lapsed mandates of the two 1950s committees were eventually incorporated into an Intellectual Freedom committee in 1961. This committee, chaired from 1962–66 by John Archer, began a more purposeful program first of providing information

for libraries and the public through a series of articles and then the composition of a statement on Intellectual Freedom for CLA members to debate. John Archer was a 1949 BLS graduate (McGill University) who had advanced to the positions of Legislative Librarian and Provincial Archivist of Saskatchewan. He came to the committee after the Canadian Criminal Code adopted a more permissive view of obscenity in publications—the new test was the interpretation of an author's "undue exploitation" of sex, crime, violence, or cruelty. This legal application opened the door to works of artistic merit to circulate freely; thus, challenges in the early 1960s swirled about novels of apparent "ill-repute" such as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Naked Lunch*, *Tropic of Cancer*, *Women in Love*, and *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*. As well, a federal statute enacted in 1960, the Canadian Bill of Rights, provided citizens with certain legal rights, such as a free press, in relation to other federal laws and government actions. However, its scope was limited. For example, it did not apply to provincial laws.

A general principled approach, not statements on individual authors or works, was adopted by CLA-ACB. John Archer's first step came in the March 1962 issue of the *Canadian Library*, where two articles appeared: "The Freedom to Read" and the "Library Bill of Rights." Both statements were reprints originally adopted by the American Library Association, which had begun to address the right to read and libraries' responsibilities as early as 1939. Later, in November 1962, Rev. Edmond Desrochers, S.J., the President of CLA, published an article, "A Catholic Librarian looks at Intellectual Freedom in the Canadian Setting." Desrochers identified some problems with the ALA statements in a Canadian context. He emphasized the need for a policy that "embodies due respect for the different philosophical and religious beliefs of the Canadian people." However, he did not oppose adoption of a statement, rather he encouraged the creation of a policy that recognized the diversity of Canada. Finally, in March 1963, the *Canadian Library* published a final article by Archer, "This Freedom." It became obvious from its two-page text that "watch and ward" should be jettisoned.

Libraries must play a vital role in the maintenance of intellectual freedom. As a responsibility of library service to the public, the reading materials selected should be chosen for interest and for informational and cultural values. The freedom of an individual to use the library should not be denied or abridged because of factors of race, national origin, or political views. Library service should offer the fullest practical coverage of materials, presenting all points of view concerning local, national and international issues of our times. The libraries and those responsible for libraries must stand as leaders for intellectual freedom and must resist social influences tending to restrict the legitimate right to provide Canadians with worthwhile books.

A CLA-ACB annual meeting was scheduled for Calgary in June 1966. The Intellectual Freedom Committee wisely decided to hold a two-day pre-conference meeting at Banff that attracted about seventy registrants. On the first day, there were topical addresses followed by four breakout discussion groups: two for public libraries, one for academic libraries, and one for government/special libraries. John Archer, now Director of Libraries at McGill University, was the incoming President of CLA-ACB and led a strategy group that condensed the findings of each group and provided a draft for discussion and adoption on the second day. Then, the CLA-ACB Council fine-tuned the draft to be forwarded at two open meetings of conference delegates at the Calgary conference. The following statement, slightly revised at these meetings, was approved Twenty-first Annual Conference on June 21, 1966.

* * * * *

Intellectual Freedom comprehends the right of every person (in the legal meaning of the term), subject to reasonable requirements of public order, to have access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual creativity, and to express his thoughts publicly.

Intellectual Freedom is essential to the health and development of society.

Libraries have a primary role to play in the maintenance and nurture of intellectual freedom.

In declaring its support of these general statements, the CLA-ACB affirm these specific propositions:

- 1) It is the responsibility of libraries to facilitate the exercise of the right of access by acquiring and making available books and other materials of the widest variety, including those expressing or advocating unconventional or unpopular ideas.
- 2) It is the responsibility of libraries to facilitate the exercise of the right of expression by making available all facilities and services at their disposal.
- 3) Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.
- 4) Librarians have a professional duty, in addition to their institutional responsibility, to uphold the principles enunciated in this statement.

* * * * *

Following the adoption of the statement, conference delegates also passed a resolution that they believed (hopefully) would secure legal recognition for libraries.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Canada be requested to recognize both this role and this responsibility by introducing amendments to the Criminal Code specifically exempting libraries from such provisions of the Code as may now or in future restrict or forbid individual citizens from acquiring books or other materials within the scope of the CLA-ACB statement on Intellectual Freedom, such materials to be acquired by libraries for purposes of research.

Not surprisingly, many matters pertaining to the federal Criminal Code were deemed more important by government officials in Ottawa. The impetus for following through on the statement and the resolution soon lapsed.

Although CLA-ACB had produced a succinct and clearly worded document that acknowledged libraries and librarians should be proactive, not reactive, in terms of censorship and freedom of expression, the association's interest in asserting its policy diminished for several years until a revival occurred in the mid-1970s. In 1974, the Church of Scientology served writs on the Hamilton and Etobicoke libraries because both libraries refused to remove books critical of Scientology, such as Cyril Vosper's *The Mind Binders*. Eventually, the Church withdrew its civil action, and CLA successfully redrafted its position on June 17, 1974 (the so-called Winnipeg Manifesto). The revised statement cited the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights and used more assertive wording, such as "guarantee," and broadened its scope by referencing "employees and employers." In many ways, this revision improved and simplified both the OLA 1963 statement and the previous CLA-ACB effort adopted at Calgary in 1966. Nevertheless, issues involving pornography, child pornography, and hate propaganda would require CLA's continued attention, especially in the 1980s: the 1974 statement was revised in November 1983 and November 1985 to reference the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Shortly before CLA disbanded, it would be revised a final time on September 27, 2015.

John Hall Archer was invested with the Order of Canada in April 1982. The University of Regina's main library is named in his honour. He died in 2004.

The Bibliothèque Edmond Desrochers at the Centre justice et foi in Montreal, specializing in the social sciences, was named in his honour in 1985. Father Desrochers died in 1987.

Read the [contemporary statement](#) adopted by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations upon review on August 26, 2016.

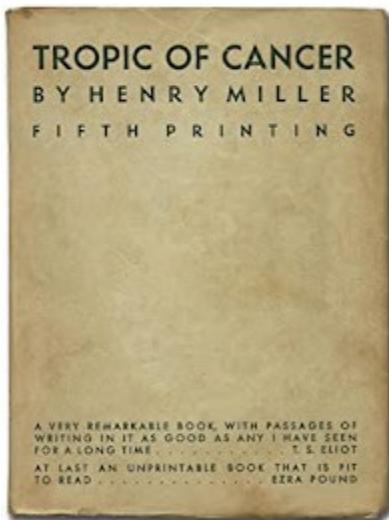
Friday, May 13, 2022

Intellectual Freedom Statement Adopted by Ontario Library Association in 1963

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Ontario and Canadian library associations formed specific committees to deal with the issue of obscene literature and censorship. At mid-century, many librarians reasoned they were selecting books, not prohibiting access or advocating freedom. They worked within an environment where Canadian law did not always ensure civil rights and liberties for everyone. In this situation, library neutrality was often cited as the best course. Most librarians believed in the concept of treating patrons equally and providing resources for multiple viewpoints. During this period, the general stance by both associations was to issue reminders that self-censorship by librarians in book selection was often a greater threat to intellectual freedom than actions by external local groups, governments, or federal laws. “Watch and ward” became a byword for both the OLA and the CLA when periodic eruptions of censorship occurred that involved libraries. In principle, the library stood as a watchman protecting the public from harm. The associations felt that the answer to a bad book was a good book.

Of course, “bad books,” even ones legally published, often could not be found on library shelves. An experienced librarian, Grace Buller, in her 1974 court testimony, said, “when I first went to the Toronto Public Library in 1949, we didn’t have a copy of Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*.” William Riggs, a Windsor trustee, told journalists at the OLA’s 1951 conference that, “we know librarians sometimes hide books containing strong language under the counters, and often refuse to give out literature on specialized subjects [e.g., birth control] to groups requesting it.” In the late 1950s, Vladimir Nabokov’s critically acclaimed but contentious novel, *Lolita*, presented difficulty for library selectors: a survey in 1959 revealed only four of twelve libraries in the metropolitan Toronto area had the book available.

Sometimes, libraries complied with police investigations: the Toronto Public Library Board surrendered copies of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* in 1961 after Canada Customs ruled it ineligible for importation.



In Ontario, film censorship and restrictions on access by classification was more evident until 1960, when the Ontario Attorney-General formed an advisory body, the Obscene Literature Committee, to review controversial books or periodicals and the “pulp.” Book publishers and distributors mostly welcomed the committee’s reports to the Attorney-General’s office because it

was a way to avoid expensive, time-consuming legal proceedings. The OLA also believed this provincial administrative process was reasonable and requested a librarian be appointed. Robert B. Porter, the chief librarian at Peterborough Public Library, joined the committee in May 1960. He had served as a lieutenant with the Regina Rifles when the regiment landed on D-Day, June 6th 1944. He had also been a member of the OLA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee in the late 1950s. Like many librarians, indeed most citizens, Porter was reluctant to alter existing conditions in the sphere of intellectual freedom but he was also fair-minded. In many ways, library trustees and librarians preferred consensus based on local, fluctuating “community standards.” Ontario libraries seldom rose to the defence of controversial books or authors. A notable exception occurred in 1955 in Flesherton when the library board and the librarian successfully defended the removal of several books accused of promoting “atheism, profanity and sex.” On

balance, Robert Fulford's 1959 assessment in the *Toronto Star* was well founded: "Libraries, in this country at least, have never been in the vanguard of the fight against censorship."

However, the OLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee began to adopt a more proactive course after the Supreme Court of Canada narrowly ruled (5–4) *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a novel by D.H. Lawrence, was not obscene in March 1962 because, on balance, it was a serious work of literature. Shortly afterwards, the committee members decided it would be an appropriate time to state clearly OLA's policy on the question of intellectual freedom and to issue a statement on its position. A new committee chair, Peter Revell, London Public Library, forged ahead for the 1963 annual meeting in Kitchener. He was an English librarian working on his MA in literature at the University of Western Ontario. Revell was familiar with censorship issues and would later pen a short article, "Propaganda and Pornography," in *Library Journal*. The OLA committee members worked through 1962–63 to agree on a policy statement. Then, at the first session of the OLA annual general meeting on May 29, 1963, in the theatre-auditorium of Waterloo Lutheran University [now Wilfrid Laurier University], the following statement on Intellectual Freedom was passed by the unanimous vote of the members present.

ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, MAY 1963

In affirming its support of the fundamental rights of freedom of the press and freedom to read, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

- (i) That the provision of library service to the Canadian public is based upon the right of the citizen, within the limits of the law, to judge for himself on questions of politics, religion and morality.

(ii) That it is the responsibility of librarians to maintain this right and to implement it in their selection of books, periodicals, films and recordings, subject only to the provisions of federal and provincial laws governing the suppression of treasonable, seditious and obscene literature.

(iii) That freedom of the press requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, including those ideas and interpretations which may be unconventional or unpopular.

(iv) That freedom of the press requires freedom of the writer to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life when such depiction is made with serious intent.

(v) That the free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society.

(vi) That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it serves to abrogate or curtail the freedom to read by demanding the removal of any book, periodical, film or recording from the library.

(vii) That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of materials is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

There was little public fanfare about the OLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom. The OLA was a small body of less than a thousand members. A few newspapers in Toronto, Kingston, Brantford, Kitchener, North Bay, and Windsor covered the new policy with brief articles. Yet, the statement marked a new era in thinking about censorship issues for Ontario's libraries. It

provided library boards with a framework, which was non-binding, to develop local formal policies on collection development and defend contentious purchases. In line with contemporary attitudes on social responsibility, it evoked a different approach to censorship and free expression. No longer would it be sufficient to guard ever changing community “standards.” A more proactive approach was necessary to allow freedom of expression for authors and the legal circulation of unconventional materials to the public. The public, not librarians, would judge the morality of an author’s work.

Of course, the Ontario library declaration coincided with the liberalization of Canadian law in terms of censorship, obscenity, and customs seizures. The OLA statement arrived several months before police in Richmond Hill and Toronto confiscated John Cleland’s *Memoirs of Fanny Hill* at the end of 1963 and the start of 1964. The novel made a long transit through the court system until December 1964 when the Ontario Supreme Court ruled *Fanny* not obscene. Later, in 1964, two years after *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was legalized by the Supreme Court of Canada, the Ontario Obscene Literature Committee ruled that Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* were serious works of literature that could circulate and be sold in Ontario. The threat of criminal prosecution for publishers or distributors was thereby lifted for similar works and more permissive standards adopted.

The OLA Intellectual Freedom Statement served Ontario libraries for three decades before major changes were introduced. While many library selectors continued to rely on various interpretations of “library neutrality,” their arguments on selection could be sharpened by reference to the “standards of accuracy, style and presentation” that the statement advocated. Of course, complaints about books continued to erupt from time to time, Xaviera Hollander’s *The Happy Hooker* being a case in point. In the early 1970s, it was apparent that reliance on a statement alone was not sufficient—libraries and the OLA needed to respond forcefully when censorship challenges arose. The 1972 OLA Kingston conference theme was Intellectual

Freedom and Censorship. A revised statement was prepared for approval but, ultimately, rejected by the membership: some delegates believed its principles actually interfered with a librarian's decision in the selection of library resources.

However, the OLA original statement would be revised to suit changing legal definitions and societal changes. The development of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and passage of the Constitution Act in 1982 followed by the growth of the Internet in the mid-1990s accentuated new issues, such as access and social responsibility. In 1990, the OLA issued an *Intellectual Freedom Handbook* to assist libraries with the changing times. The OLA statement was revised in 1990, 1998, and more recently in 2020 to reflect the rights of individuals as well as the concept of intellectual freedom in a democratic society. Still, there are recognizable passages from the 1963 version, especially the first and fifth clause, that continue to resonate six decades on.

The OLA spokesperson on censorship in the mid-1960s, Peter Revell, returned to Britain to earn a PhD in librarianship at the University of Wales. He published important studies about American poetry and was chief librarian at Westfield College (London) from 1975 until his death in 1983. The Obscene Literature Committee continued its work until 1972 when it was dissolved because it was no longer needed. Bob Porter continued at Peterborough until his retirement announcement in 1980. He died in 2010.

Further reading:

The current [Ontario Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual](#) (2020)

Peter Revell, "Censorship Facts." *Ontario Library Review* 46 (May 1962): 95–96

Peter Revell, "Viewpoint: Propaganda and Pornography." *Library Journal* 88 (October 1, 1963): 3562 and 3585.

D. Granfield and N. Barakett, *Intellectual Freedom Handbook* (Toronto: Ontario Library Association, 1990)

Pearce J. Carefoote, *Forbidden Fruit: Banned, Censored and Challenged Books from Dante to Harry Potter* (Toronto: Lester, Mason & Begg, 2007)

